2 new witnesses in Kuratong rubout talk

STORY ON PAGE A2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2001 ★ 48 PAGES 3 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 111 ₱15

Conductor Romero dies of lung cancer

ROMERO

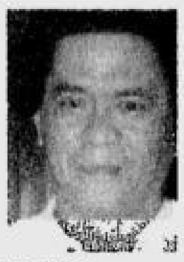
BY PABLO A. TARIMAN

CONDUCTOR Redentor Romero, the first Filipino to conduct the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic, the London Philharmonic and the Beijing

CONDUCTOR/ A15

Inquirer columnist GMA spokesperson

BY ARMAND NOCUM


TIGLAO

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has tapped veteran journalist Rigoberto D. Tiglao as her new spokesperson, according to Palace sources.

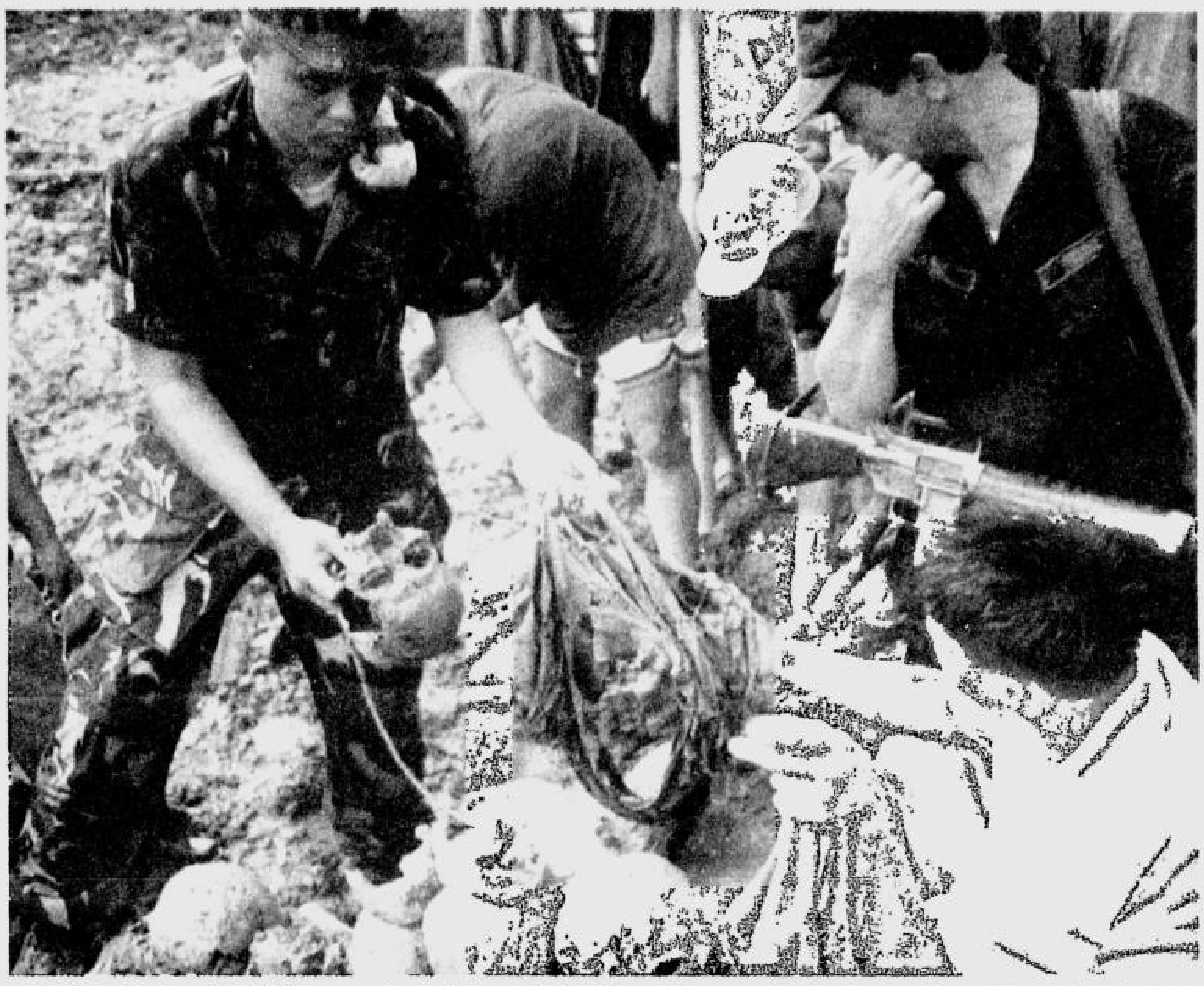
Sources said Tiglao had

PDI/ A15

Soldiers dig up 8 NPA mass graves

Skeletal remains of 75 suspected spies found

BY FROILAN GALLARDO
PDI Mindanao Bureau


SOLDIERS of the Army's 4th Division unearth a dark chapter in the history of the communist New People's Army which celebrates its 32nd founding anniversary today.

PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

OPOL, Misamis Oriental—Every now and then for the past 17 years, Eduardo Bitaugan would trek back to an abandoned quarry in Sitio Tawili, Barangay Kauyonan, and light a candle.

On Tuesday, Bitaugan returned to the site and led soldiers to what he and the local folk refer to as "kalaberahan."

There, in the "field of skeletons," soldiers dug up eight mass graves and found the remains of at least 75 people, including those of a child and his parents. They were the victims of a bloody purge carried out in the 1980s by the communist New People's Army to cleanse its ranks of suspected government spies.

Bitaugan, 28, was only 11 years old when the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines began killing its own kind in 1984. The executions continued until 1986.

"For 17 years, I carried the images of the killings in my conscience. They screamed and pleaded for their lives," Bitaugan, an NPA guide then, told the INQUIRER in the vernacular.

According to him, the NPA rebels spared a woman but killed the rest. He remembered in particular how five men and two women were killed.

"They used crowbars to bash the heads of the victims. The rebels also threw big rocks on those who were still breathing. It was sickening," Bitaugan said.

According to the French news agency Agence France Presse, a military statement quoted Bitaugan as saying that the women were killed "through the unorthodox method of pulling out something from their sexual organs with the use of the forceps."

News of the discovery of the mass graves came on the eve of the 32nd anniversary of the founding of the NPA on March 29, 1969.

It also came a day after President Macapagal-

SOLDIERS/ A16

Too harsh, justice says of dismissal

BY CATHY YAMSUAN, ÁLCUIN PAPA AND MICHAEL LIM UBAC

DEMETRIO Demetria does not look like an appellate justice who has just been dismissed by the Supreme Court for meddling in the court case of a suspected drug dealer.

"I slept well. I really slept well last night," the 60-year-old former associate justice of the Court of Appeals told reporters in a press conference at a Manila condominium yesterday morning.

If he was upset over the Supreme Court's decision to kick him out of the judiciary, Demetria did a good job of not showing it. His bitterness manifested only when he spoke.

"This is my name at stake, my whole family is involved. It is not just my career. The (Supreme Court justices) should not have done that to me just because they want to clean up the tribunal's image," he said.

Demetria decided yesterday afternoon to file a motion for reconsideration with the Supreme Court. He hired former Cebu Assemblyman Filemon Fernandez as his lawyer.

He said the 14 Supreme Court justices, including Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., who signed the order dismissing him, based the decision on "wrong appreciation of evidence."

Demetria also complained that the penalty was "too harsh."

Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael Khan said the court's decision should not be questioned because its members thoroughly studied the case.

TOO HARSH/ A16

Almonte: Letter shows Dacer feared Estrada

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA AND VOLT CONTRERAS

A LETTER by missing public relations man Salvador "Bubby" Dacer more than a month before his abduction shows that he believed that former President Joseph Estrada and former Philippine National Police chief Panfilo Lacson were monitoring him and might have been planning to harm him.

Former National Security Adviser Jose Almonte said the letter, which bore Dacer's signature and the letterhead of his PR firm, was the last of several that Dacer had sent him before he disappeared last Nov. 24.

The letters, according to Almonte, focused on Dacer's fears that Estrada and Lacson might harm him.

Dacer's daughter Sabina confirmed the authenticity of the letter and urged investigators to zero in on Estrada and Lacson's possible involvement in the abduction.

"I write instead of calling you to avoid being recorded by General Lacson and President Estrada," read the letter dated Oct. 20, 2000.

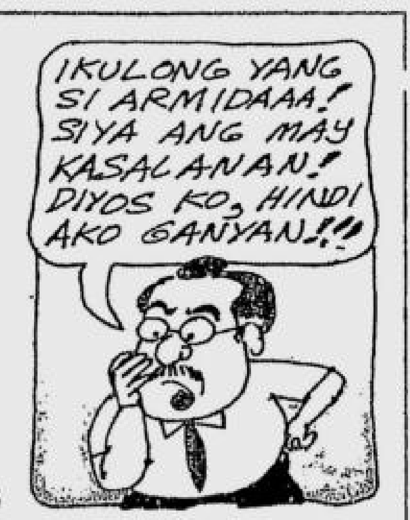
"I have been repeatedly warned by friends in the Police, Military, Local Governments, Business and media that President Estrada has tagged me as the field officer in the alleged destabilization campaign against the (administration)."

The letter writer told Almonte that government officials, including former President Fidel Ramos, were "concerned" about the report, and that a Manila policeman had even offered to provide him with a "safehouse."

Declining the offer, Dacer said he would leave for the United States on Oct. 20 for a two-week visit.

ALMONTE/ A16

Manoling shrieks: Jail Tita Midz


IKULONG YANG SI ARMIDAAA! SIYA ANG MAY KASALANAN! DIYOS KO, HINDI AKO GANYAN!!!

BY BLANCHE S. RIVERA

THE CONTROVERSIAL film "Live Show" has pitted Manuel "Manoling" Morato, an independent senatorial candidate, against Armida Siguion-Reyna, who is running for a seat in the House of Representatives.

MANOLING/ A16

DOJ chief taps Chavez to track Marcos wealth

BY DONNA S. CUETO AND BLANCHE S. RIVERA

IN A bold move, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez yesterday said he would adopt new approaches toward recovering the Marcos wealth with President Macapagal-Arroyo "fully supportive" of renewed efforts to track down the alleged billions of the heirs of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Perez said the Department of Justice would deputize former Solicitor General Francisco "Frank" Chavez in "all matters" involving the alleged ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses, including the possible recovery of Irene Marcos-Araneta's alleged deposits in Switzerland.

Chavez said the new approach of the department "goes to show that the DOJ (believes that) there is basis for the existence of the 885931 accounts, and that there was really an aborted attempt to si-

DOJ/ A15

GLIMPSES OF A SHRINKING WORLD

Lollipops, calling cards, Homer Simpson, monkfish livers, Nike baseball caps on the move

CURTAIN up on the world stage. The day: March 15, 2001. The place: a connected planet.

Scene I: On a crisp dawn, at the Sea Fresh USA factory in Portland, Maine, Pepper Hanley weighs the carved-up innards of *Lophius americanus*, the unappreciated bottom-feeding monkfish. Their destination: Japanese soup bowls 16,000 km away, where monkfish livers are a succulent delicacy.

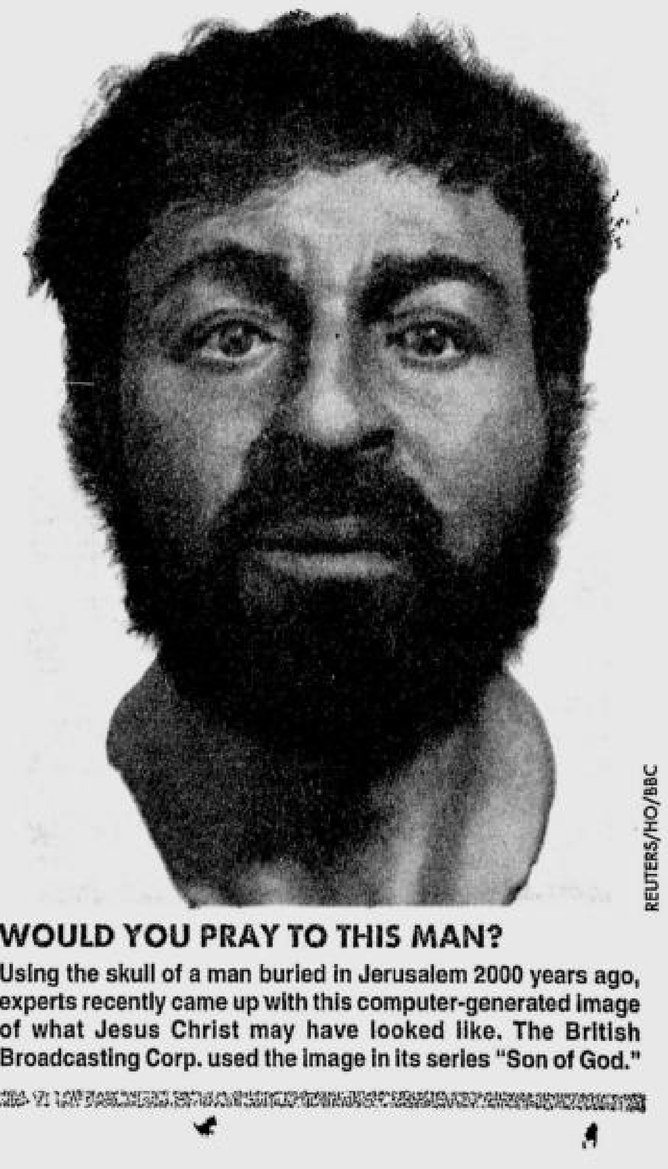
Scene II: On southern Turkey's barren Cukurova plains, farmers prepare to plant their cotton crop. Among its destinations: the American mall, part of the $1 billion in exported material that ends up in Fruit of the Loom three-packs and that Banana Republic knit top you just can't do without.

Scene III: Inside Carnegie's Bar in Hong Kong, a young woman named Apple Wan, a Carlsberg beer "promoter," flits among tables, charming men into buying pints of Scandinavian beer brewed in China. In Denmark, her company earns another few kroner.

Scene IV: In the ancient bazaars of Peshawar, Pakistan, near the Khyber Pass, Mohammed Riaz steps over the open sewer in front of his shop and walks in. Inside a steel safe beside the moneychanger's computer and fax sit stacks of currency depicting a man dead for 202 years—a man named George Washington.

A connected planet: humans and products and money, chess pieces mov-

LOLLIPOPS/ A16


REUTERS/HO/BBC

WOULD YOU PRAY TO THIS MAN?

Using the skull of a man buried in Jerusalem 2000 years ago, experts recently came up with this computer-generated image of what Jesus Christ may have looked like. The British Broadcasting Corp. used the image in its series "Son of God."

MATINDI ITONG KINANTA NG MGA WITNESSES!

New Kuratong witnesses talk

Lacson says it's part of plot to derail his Senate bid

By Andrea Trinidad-Echavez and Dave Veridiano

FORMER national police chief Panfilo Lacson and another police general were present when the former chief of the then Traffic Management Command allegedly ordered his men to kill eight suspected members of the Kuratong Baleleng kidnap gang in May 1995.

This was disclosed yesterday by a former junior police officer, the latest witness to surface and give new testimony on the six-year-old summary execution case, prompting lawyers from the Free Legal Assistance Group to ask the Macapagal-Arroyo administration to reopen the controversial case.

Senior Insp. Abelardo Ramos said he was one of those allegedly given the orders to kill the eight suspected kidnap gang members by the then TMC director Senior Supt. Francisco Zubia.

Ramos and another witness, former Insp. Ismael Yu, were presented to the media in a hastily called press conference yesterday by Flag lawyers.

Yu was the leader of the assault team, which raided the gang's hideout in Superville Subdivision in Parañaque on the eve of May 17, 1995.

Ramos was with the team that transported the eight suspects from Parañaque to Camp Crame.

The media were, however, barred from interviewing the witnesses.

The lawyers' group urged the government to reopen the case and immediately file charges against Lacson, Zubia, Chief Supt. Romeo Acop and all those allegedly involved in the rubout.

With the new testimony, the Flag expressed confidence that this time it can get a conviction against the suspects in the grisly murder.

Multiple murder

Multiple murder charges were filed against Lacson and 24 other police officers for the killing in 1995 of 11 suspected members of the Kuratong Baleleng kidnap gang. The charges were dismissed by a Quezon City court in March 1999.

In a press statement yesterday, Lacson said the revival of the Kuratong Baleleng case was "part of a sustained demolition campaign to derail" his candidacy.

Lacson, who is running for senator under the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, said the case was "a convenient tool."

"This is nothing new. It's the trend. Since the campaign started, various issues have been raised against me," he said.

In a statement that he gave to Flag lawyers, Ramos said that on the night of May 17, 1995, he was called to Camp Crame by Zubia who then ordered him to take the arrested suspected gang members to Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City and kill them.

Ramos said Zubia had given the orders in the presence of two other police officers—Lacson, chief of the Task Force Habagat of the defunct Presidential Anti-crime Commission, and Chief Supt. Romeo Acop, the then director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

Ramos explained that just before Zubia gave him the order, the three officers had a discussion about what to do with the eight suspects. He said Zubia and Acop wanted to present them to the media the next day but Lacson was allegedly for their elimination.

Day and time

He said it was Lacson's idea that prevailed, but because Ramos was under Zubia's command, it was the latter who had to give him the order.

The "rubout order" was carried out in the early morning of May 18 by Ramos and three other TMG operatives.

Ramos said he and his team were tasked to kill four suspects and four others.

The teams left Camp Crame in a convoy of about five vehicles and went to Quezon City where the "make-believe shootout" took place.

Asked why there were 11 killed when only eight had been arrested, Ramos said the others may have come from a house earlier raided by Task Force Habagat agents where four people were arrested, including a woman.

In another sworn affidavit, Yu said he led a PNP Special Action Force team that conducted a raid on the Kuratong Baleleng hideout at the South Superville subdivision in Parañaque on the evening of May 17, 1995 and arrested the eight suspects.

Yu said the eight had been alive when they were taken to the PNP headquarters at Camp Crame.

Flag lawyer Jose Manuel I. Diokno said that with the testimony of the new witnesses, Flag had enough evidence to secure a conviction.

Act fast

But the government has to act fast. Otherwise, we fear that it may end up like the last time we filed charges against the alleged perpetrators. Sadly, it never even reached trial stage," he said.

Any delay in the prosecution always works in favor of the accused as it could give them ample time to "twist arms" and manipulate witnesses, as happened in the first case that was filed, he said.

"Had the government only listened to us and had it any political will, this case would have already been concluded by now," said Theodore Te, another Flag lawyer.

Te said Flag would leave the prosecution to government lawyers.

"We will turn over the new witnesses and their statements to Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, with the hope and expectation that the Macapagal-Arroyo administration will not allow another whitewash or coverup of the cases, as had taken place during the past two administrations," Te said.

Asked why the witnesses came out only now during an election period, the Flag lawyers said they were in no position to dictate when witnesses decide to come out.

"As far as we are concerned, we are merely messengers out to tell the government that we have new witnesses who are willing to testify against the perpetrators," said Diokno.

The Flag lawyers said they had nothing to do with politics. Even if it was not an election period, Flag would facilitate the testimony of new witnesses, they said.

NEW Kuratong witnesses Abelardo Ramos and Ysmael Yu presented to the media by FLAG lawyer Arno Sanidad. EDWIN BACASMAS

Now, PPC bets can travel in style

By J. Javellana

AFTER suffering funding problems, the People Power Coalition can now afford to travel in style.

For their barn-storming of Pangasi-nan and Zambales, the PPC senatorial candidates arrived in three private helicopters at the Cape Bolinao High School yesterday morning.

Joker Arroyo had one helicopter to himself courtesy of a friend, according to PPC image consultant Lupita Aquino-Kashiwahara.

Candidates Francis Pangilinan, Ralph Recto and Wigberto Tañada arrived in another chopper while Manuel Villar, Roberto Pagdanganan and Juan Flavier came aboard a third whirlybird.

Ernesto Herrera traveled by land, leaving Manila at 3 a.m. to catch up with the 8:15 a.m. mini-rally in Bolinao, Pangasinan.

The five other PPC candidates did not make it to the rally.

Kashiwahara said it was the first time the PPC candidates were able to avail themselves of helicopters for their sorties.

She said she did not know how much was spent for the choppers, which also took the candidates to Botolan and Olongapo City in Zambales.

"I normally go by land, maybe we have money now," Villar said.

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RP to seek China help vs drug trafficking

NATIONAL Security Adviser Roilo Golez yesterday called on China to do more to stop the flow of illegal drugs to the Philippines, describing it as the country's main security threat.

Illegal narcotics factories in five eastern Chinese provinces, some possibly run by rogue Chinese troops, ship up to P60 billion worth of methampethamine hydrochloride, or "shabu," into the Philippines every year.

Filipino police have told Chinese officials that it was "possible" that "some moonlighting PLA (People's Liberation Army) officers are the ones running the manufacturing of the plants in four or five coastal provinces in China," Golez told a news conference.

He said he considered the P265 billion annual drugs trade —an amount equivalent to eight percent of the Philippines' economic output—as the "greatest threat" to national security in terms of economic impact and the number of victims.

Chinese officials have taken note of Manila's complaints and assured the Philippine government "that they do not tolerate this," Golez said.

But bilateral cooperation on the issue only started about two years ago, and Beijing's efforts are "not yet sufficient if you ask us," he added.

Golez said shabu, a banned stimulant, accounted for the bulk of the drugs trade, with locally grown marijuana a distant second.

China's drug dealers accounted for about 95 percent of the shabu supply, he said.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona and President Macapagal-Arroyo are to visit China in April and October, respectively, to attend regional economic summits.

Golez said it was up to the Philippines' narcotics police whether the country's leaders should raise the drugs smuggling issue with their Chinese counterparts during the visits. *AFP*

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We, members of civil society organizations and individuals, wish to affirm our support for Bienvenido A. Tan, Jr., former Commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and former Philippine Ambassador to Germany.

We have worked with, or known Benny Tan for many years because of his various involvement with philanthropic and civil society organizations, among these: Association of Foundations, Assumption Educational Development Foundation, Ayala Foundation, Bahay ni Angelo King Foundation, Basic Socio-Economic Foundation, Caucus of Development NGO Networks, Children and Youth Foundation of the Philippines, Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation, Corporate Network for Disaster Response, National Confederation of Cooperatives, Network for NGOs, Notre Dame de Vie Institute, Mother of Life Center, Mother Rosa Memorial Foundation, Philippine Business for Social Progress, Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, University of the Philippines Foundation, Inc., University of the Philippines Medical Foundation, Inc., Visayas Network of NGOs, and Xavier School.

He has shown nothing but the highest level of personal commitment and dedication to the work of poverty alleviation, work that he has been associated with for over 40 years. He has shown what leadership is about, by personally going out to visit the projects and talking to the communities that have benefited from these projects. Going beyond such direct project exposure, he has also recommended improvements in the systems and procedures of programs, to make sure that the benefits were delivered effectively for the poor.

He has been unstinting in his support of organizations that help those in need, articulating time and again that to him, the call of Christianity is to exercise our personal responsibility to help those who have less in life. In so doing, he has inspired many development workers to do more, and to give of themselves even more.

In his most critical hour of need, we stand by him and affirm our belief in his integrity.

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Optional sex advocate faces Church sanction

By Norman Bordadora

THE FATE of the monsignor who openly suggested making celibacy optional for Catholic priests is up to Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines said it was up to Sin to sanction Msgr. Nico Bautista for making the suggestion, which goes against Church doctrine and the rules on the priesthood.

Bautista made the suggestion as the Church was reeling from a news report about priests raping and impregnating nuns.

"(Issuing sanctions against Monsignor Nico) is the avenue of Cardinal Sin," said Msgr. Hernando "Ding" Coronel, CBCP media director.

Coronel said Bautista is a retired priest who is under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Manila.

"It would be up to him (Sin) if he wants to talk with Monsignor Nico, but the CBCP is of the position that the call for optional celibacy does not conform with the Church's doctrine," Coronel told the INQUIRER.

The CBCP said making celibacy optional for priests was not the answer to the immorality of some of them.

"(Celibacy) is something that distinguishes Catholic priests from the religious or other denominations. Making it optional is not the solution to the problem," said Coronel.

"What we should do is enforce the rules of the priesthood more strictly," he said.

Bautista had suggested making celibacy optional for priests after the Vatican aoknowledged a news report that said priests had raped and impregnated nuns in at least 23 countries, including the Philippines, over the past several years.

Pope John Paul II and the CBCP both have apologized for the priests' misdeeds.

"In other Christian denominations, where they allow ministers to marry they have problems like divorce, where they allow women priests, they have problems of single parenthood," Coronel said.

Coronel said better seminary formation and more stringent screening of applicants for the priesthood would better address the problem.

"For those who are already in relationships, we have what we call a discernment period. They would have to choose between the priesthood or the woman. They cannot have both," he said.

Bautista made his suggestion early this week in Dumaguete City where he addressed the graduates of Foundation University.

Priest says Manero must 1st own crime

COTABATO CITY—Norberto Manero Jr. must first admit his crimes and then reveal who ordered the killing of Italian priest Tulio Favali in Tulunan, North Cotabato, in 1995, before the revocation of his pardon could be lifted.

These were the conditions set by Fr. Peter Geremia of the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions (Pime), who was believed to be the real target of Manero's grou p before they killed Favali.

Manero should stop denying he killed Favali, Geremia said.

Manero's brother, Edilberto, who is serving life terms at the national penitentiary, had admitted in a television interview that he killed Favali. He said his brother Norberto was innocent of the crime.

Manero escaped from the Sarangani Provincial Jail on March 22, it is suspected, by hiding in the trunk of his wife's car as she left the prison after a conjugal visit.

In General Santos City, Sister Susan Bolanio, executive director of the Justice and Peace Desk of the Diocese of Marbel, said Manero's escape could be a precursor of the resurgence of paramilitary and vigilante groups in Mindanao.

"He was set for release. So why would he escape?" she asked, saying his escape appeared timed with the resumption of peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

In Davao City, the Moro group Khadidja Moro Women alliance expressed its "grave concern" over the slow pace of police and military efforts to track down Manero.

Former President Fidel Ramos branded as "both reckless and irresponsible, to say the least," Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr.'s recent statement implying that persons connected to his administration might have been behind Manero's escape.

In a statement to the press Tuesday, Ramos said, "It is difficult to find reason in the proposition that Manero was freed so he could be used in the (May 14) elections, (considering he) is a very high-profile criminal whose face is as familiar as the more popular candidates.

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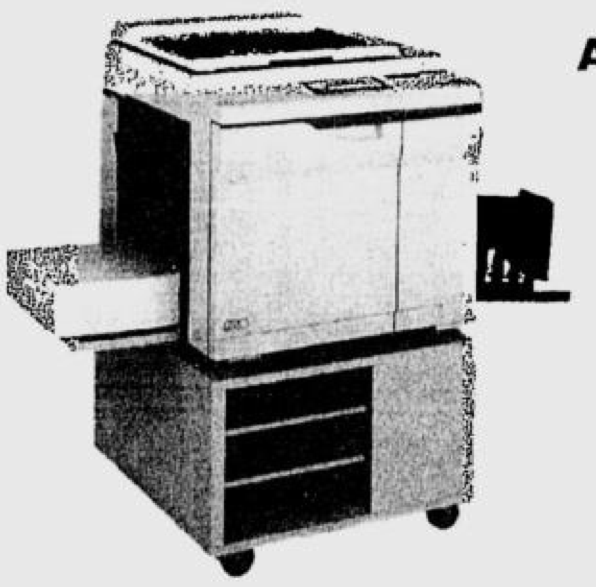

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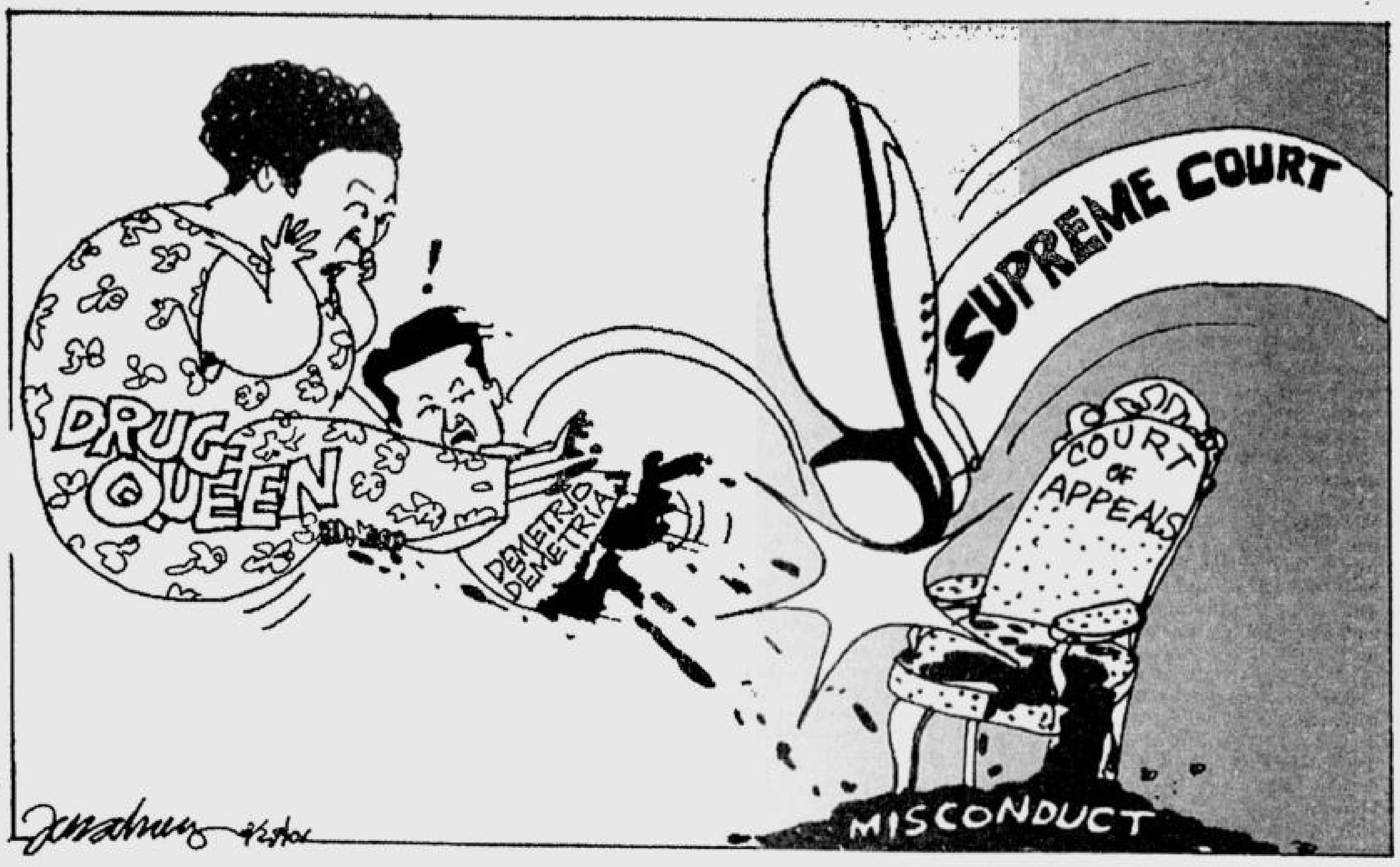


EDITORIALS

Hope

JUSTICE Bernardo Pardo spoke for the great majority of Filipinos, and not just the youth, when he dissented with the Supreme Court's decision to turn down an extension of the registration period with these words: "It is reasonably expected that the Comelec, under the new leadership, would take appropriate action in order not to deprive those who are qualified to vote of their right because of the neglect, inaction, or delay in its preparation for the coming elections."

That was what Akbayan and UP student Michelle Betito argued when they filed the petition calling for the extension. If the 4.5 million youth, who are qualified voters, didn't meet the Dec. 27 deadline, they said, it was because the Commission on Elections hadn't exerted itself to make that deadline known. A law becomes a law only when it is well publicized.

Pardo's dissenting view was shared by five other justices, including Hilario Davide. Unfortunately, the rest—the vote was 8-6—did not.

We will not press the point. The other justices, citing the Comelec, argue that the logistical needs simply cannot be met, which may result in more harm than good—in terms of flying voters—if new registration at this late date is pushed. We will take their argument in good faith. We will agree to put the case to rest.

The lesson we ought to learn from this, however, is that we should not allow it to happen again. The Comelec said its attempts to publicize the deadline were drowned out by the frenzied events of last year, particularly the impeachment trial that hogged the attention of the nation. Fair enough. But the same explanation, or excuse, may not be admitted the second time around. Experience is the best teacher. Next time, the Comelec must prepare for all sorts of contingencies—another attention-grabbing issue might hit the nation three years from now—and lay the groundwork for registering the next batch of voters a lot earlier.

Disenfranchising 4.5 million voters is simply unacceptable. Not the least because they represent the "idealistic vote." The youth vote is less likely to be influenced by guns, goons and gold. It is less prone to be being bought, coerced and intimidated. It is less prone to voting for *trapos*, or traditional politicians, who have been the bane of Philippine politics for ages. Indeed, it is more prone to vote on the basis of issues and for people who represent change. It doesn't guarantee elections will be better, but it offers hope of it.

All is not lost even now, however. The fact that the 4.5 million youth cannot vote this year doesn't mean they may not try to accomplish in other ways what their vote might have done. They can always campaign for the candidates who represent new politics. Or they can always campaign against the candidates who have a track record for messing up the country. Several of them are trying to seduce the voters again. Several of them are trying to steal the nation's future once again.

Many of those young people took part in the struggle that brought down a tyranny and brought People Power in its place. They can always help rekindle the spirit in the voters' hearts.

Certainty

JUST as vital as ensuring that the millions of youth get to vote in elections three years from now is ensuring that the millions of overseas Filipinos get to vote three years from now. Probably more so.

At the very least, that is because the overseas vote, like the youth's, is not likely to be influenced by guns, goons and gold. It is not prone to being bought or intimidated. How can you buy people who earn dollars as doctors and nurses, mining engineers and forklift operators? How can you terrorize people who passionately care about their country's future?

Allowing them to vote is a matter of justice. At least a tenth of the Filipino population live abroad, and most of them are of voting age. The OFWs in particular, who have been hailed as the country's modern-day heroes, and rightly so, are the source of the money that's bailing this country out of disaster. To call them heroes but deprive them of the most basic right of citizens is to take with the left hand what the right hand gives. It is to make *uto-uto*, or fools, of them.

The bill that would have allowed them to vote passed through committee hearings last year but died soon afterward. Congress says its approval was impeded by the impeachment trial last year, which gripped everyone's attention. That argument may not be used again next time. If the overseas Filipinos are not allowed to vote again next time, they have a right to ask that senators and congressmen be lined up against the wall.

Heinous crimes deserve heinous punishments.

More on those wonderful fireflies

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I DIDN'T realize my column on the fireflies in the park (PDI, 3/23/01) would create so much todo. Obviously, fireflies are a rarity in the city and people want to see their dance of light. I got a lot of phone calls and e-mail on it. Friends and strangers accost me on the street to ask about it. Colleagues ask for directions on how to get to the park. Neighbors go to the park at dusk and ask when the fireflies would come out. People from other subdivisions go to the park on their own to look for the fireflies. Unfortunately, the fireflies have gone away since the last weekend. There were a few stragglers flitting here and there, but the main body was gone. We go there every night hoping they would be back, but they haven't returned so far. I don't know why they left or where they went or when they will return.

Did they leave when the maintenance workers, expecting an influx of visitors, cut the grass short? Or did they die after dutifully laying their eggs? In which case, we would have another light show when the eggs hatch.

Fortunately, we have an e-mail from Dave General, presumably an entomologist, that partly explains the phenomenon. He said the fireflies in the trees were males attracting the females and, after choosing their partners and mating with them, they left. I didn't know there are also hit-and-run operators among insects. But let Mr. General explain it:

"I read your previous columns about the fireflies with amusement for I share your fascination with fireflies. And in response to your anguished plea for edification, I would like to share the following:

"(1) The fireflies you see congregating in one tree, and even flashing in seeming synchronicity, are all males. They're flashing mating invitations to the females hiding in the undergrowth, which, in turn, flash acceptance.

"(2) The implications of these facts are: the location is presently favorable for fireflies; no improvements are necessary, except, perhaps, to reduce the trampling risk to female fireflies when people come too close to the "firefly tree": and, when the females have all found mates, they will stop flashing encouraging signals, and the males move on.

"(3) This is a seasonal occurrence for each species. You might be fortunate enough to observe other species of fireflies in their mating splendor at other times.

"(4) Raising butterflies is more involved and quite expensive. But you could improve the chances of seeing more fireflies, butterflies and moths by stopping the ugly practice of burning leaves and trash. Many species pupate on the ground and can be destroyed by this 'sanitary' practice.

"I hope that you will remain fascinated with these insects even as you now understand a bit of their wonderful lives."

Another e-mail from Carmen Miraflor of Siquijor said there are plenty of fireflies and butterflies in her province and invites those who want to see them to come and visit. Here is her invitation:

"Visit Siquijor Island to see fireflies and butterflies. Our butterflies come in all sizes and colors and they flutter about any time of the year. Go to the hills and walk off the beaten paths into the fields...

"As to fireflies, the island has them too except that they appear only occasionally, usually during the summer. One of the most beautiful sights imbedded in my memory is that of fireflies hovering on a 10-foot tree right after Angelus when the sun had completely set. Because we had nothing then but soft starlight to guide our way during our evening strolls, that night the fireflies made the tree glow intensely in the dark outdoors! The sight was just too beautiful to ignore. I had to stop and savor the moment.

"They were gone the next night, but the memory lives on.

"I completely understand your reaction to the fireflies. That feeling will stay with you forever."

Mila Alora, an old friend, adds her own wonder and awe of fireflies:

"Congratulations for that wonderful article on fireflies. As a girl growing up in the province, it was a sheer delight to see fireflies in the evening especially on trees that were supposed to house folklore *kapre* and other elemental beings. They added magic to the stories that were told to us when we were young. Even now, every time I see fireflies (which is not very often) I'm still fascinated by their wonderful choreography in their very own dance of lights. A pity that kids nowadays (more so the city-bred) do not have much opportunity to witness magic at its best. Beats any 'live show' anytime."

Torquemada's ghost

WINDMILLS

Jerry Barican

NEWLY installed presidents, if they are not careful, sometimes let an agenda dominate them rather than the other way around. Kennedy with the Bay of Pigs, Clinton with gays in the military, Erap with the Marcos funeral, and now, GMA with censorship—these were situations which the most elaborate transition plans never anticipated.

Censorship is the classic no-win situation and why the administration decided to invest its political capital so early and so heavily in it, with the President herself directly intervening in the midst of far more serious problems, has not yet been satisfactorily explained. Moreover, even those who agree with the banning may feel it could have been handled better.

This was the first direct presidential intervention to ban a movie since the President's father, then President Macapagal, ordered the Board of Censors to ban "Iginuhit Ng Tadhana" in 1965. The then censors chair, now columnist, Joe Guevara, also resigned in protest.

There will be, as ever, voices on opposite sides of this issue. But this was a film which, reportedly, was itself also recommended for showing with an "Adults Only" rating by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' own affiliated cinema board, thereby weakening the new censors chair's loyal argument that it was pornographic.

Both the President and Jaime Cardinal Sin appeared to have had the movie banned without yet having seen it, although the President seems to have seen it subsequently. It seems that the title, and the theme, offended them. This begs the question of what the institutions they represent have been doing all this time about reality rather than its mere depiction. The real, it appears, arouses less indignation than the reel.

The effects of this tempest, however, are twofold. First, on the rule of law. The procedures and legal process ordained by law have simply been brushed aside, in favor of what was determined to be a higher cause. This tends to further weaken our legal institutions already made shaky by the judicial contortions needed to justify the legitimacy of Edsa II. It is after all the board's and the judiciary's, and not the executive's, function to determine what is pornographic under the law. Is the law to vary every six years based upon the idiosyncratic views of the presidential incumbent?

Which brings us to item two. Investor and business confidence thrives on the assurance and certainties of law and the avoidance of the arbitrary. A level playing field is no good if the referee doesn't follow the rule book. To the extent that this incident illustrates the shifting attitude of government to the mandates of the law, it can add to the doubts of investors on doing business here.

This remarkable episode has also thrown the whole issue of censorship into semantic disarray. Despite the change of nomenclature from a "Board of Censors" to a "Board of Classification," in the end what they continued to do was to censor films. Perhaps we can effect a compromise by renaming the movie review body a "Board of Euphemisms" instead.

Neither is the Church going to escape unscathed. Already, there are angry voices who are contrasting its indignation over this movie with its eloquent silence over the Vatican report on priests raping nuns in the Philippines, never mind cases of clerical sexual misconduct of every kind, including paramours and child abuse. Why are mistresses of public officials a matter for the Church but priest-rapists not a matter for the State? Is this to become a case of the Pharisee's rather than the Emperor's new clothes?

Apparently, Cardinal Sin is so vehemently in favor of censorship that he has simultaneously censored both "Live Show" and the report on the sexual conduct of clerics in the Philippines (it took the Vatican to tell us). What are we to make of that? *Qui tacet consentire.* To be silent, the maxim of the law tells us, is to give consent.

Is the Church remanding the rapists to the civil authorities for lawful punishment? Is it confessing the number of incidents? Is it providing substantial and adequate compensation to the victims or their families? Is it taking care of the offspring—God forbid they have been aborted, but tell us about that too—and providing restitution for the harrowing circumstances of the children's own births? Are we to hear sermons and pastoral letters?

No, or at least we have not been told of such things. Instead, we have had a cover-up, and silence, for years. Instead, we have heard a cursory apology from the CBCP, as if that were anywhere near enough. Let them gird their loins and answer, as Job did, and put on sackcloth and ashes.

The other indelible impression about this episode is that it demonstrates the administration's continuing difficulty in projecting its priorities. With all the fundamental problems facing us, why are we not hearing a little more about garbage (we ban incinerators then order the burning of waste in our streets because we have no place to put it) or economic recovery and a little less about 13-0 and "Live Show"? Why is an administration that was so brilliant in opposition proving somewhat less so in government?

None of this negates the film industry's own shoddy record of film producing. As has been repeatedly urged in this space, it needs to take responsibility for its provocative advertising, for the distribution of its still photographs to magazines that are peddled on street corners to children, and for the availability of its products via technology to minors. Until the industry can assure us that "Adults Only" means precisely that, its appeals to artistic freedom will ring hollow. And unless the industry and its critics work together, this is a ceaseless argument of the deaf.

The coming few years will be among the most difficult in our history. If we cannot work together, choose consensus over confrontation, prefer to resolve major disagreements and defer relatively minor ones, do not abandon sanctimony and hypocrisy, we are destined to fail. If the Church's and State's heavy-handed handling of "Live Show" and the film industry's response are any indication of how we will face the future, we have cause to be heavy-hearted.

I had thought that the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada and the Inquisition itself, which burned sinners in order to save them, were long gone. The Vatican report on clerical rape says Padre Damaso is alive and well. Unfortunately, so apparently is Torquemada's ghost.

Artists in grip of money-oriented producers

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IF the audience of movies like "Live Show" were to be composed only of my culturally sophisticated and enlightened media colleagues, such as Conrado de Quiros, Rina Jimenez-David and Ellen Tordesillas, indeed there is no problem. But the difficulty is that their kind constitutes only a fraction of the mass audience of Filipino movies.

Conrad argues that "For Adults Only" means "evoking an adult or mature or complex emotional and intellectual response" (to the film). That's precisely the difficulty—how many in these films' audience are "adult" or "mature" in that they are capable of complex emotional and intellectual response? Wasn't it Comelec Chair Alfredo Benipayo who recently lamented that our people are still so immature, and that they badly need deeper political education? Our colleague, former Justice Isagani Cruz, keeps lamenting this all the time and recent political events have left that lament unchallenged. My question is, if the people remain basically still politically unformed, can they be suddenly culturally sophisticated?

* * *

Resigned Censors Chief Nick Tiongson was quoted as saying that if after watching "Live Show" a viewer is "titillated," then he or she must be "sick." Well, that's the problem. A young acquaintance of mine saw the controversial movie and afterwards went to the men's room to answer the call of nature; he saw evidences of masturbation all over the place. This is the reality, which is why the subject of sex and violence in the mass media, especially in the movies, must be treated with a lot of restraint.

* * *

I have been served as volunteer for many years now in the board of an NGO dedicated to keeping students from very poor families in school, so that they don't become dropout statistics. This is the Erda Foundation, established in 1974 by Fr. Pierre Tritz, S.J. Thus I have been very aware of the situation in our public schools, where out of every 100 students only 60 percent survive elementary school and even less high school. This is the audience that Filipino movies attract mainly. And precisely because many of the people suffer from poorly formed education, it is not prudent to expect them to have the discerning faculties of better-educated cultural sophisticates.

Conrad argued the need for "tolerance." By all means, but let's practice it all around. Let's respect too the people's clamor for a return to sobriety and balance in the mass media.

* * *

In that connection, my colleague Rina bats for total freedom of expression for the artist so that he is completely unshackled by society's demands and mores; she argues that society ought to accept their work as the artists present them to us. The problem is that it is common knowledge in the film industry that many artists are in reality in the grip of the producers who are mainly there for the money on the so-called "*pito-pito* basis"—finish the movie in seven days with a budget of only P2 million, but be sure there's enough to titillate the audience to ensure box-office returns. And judging from movie outputs in recent months, it's obvious that the money-oriented producers have dominated.

Tiongson himself admits that the movie industry is a "dying industry" largely because it has remained unpatronized as the majority prefer American movies. In the past many months under Estrada Censors Chief Armida Siguion-Reyna, it was obvious that the producers were encouraged to resuscitate the industry through the production of *bomba* films, but unfortunately this was at the expense of the public. At the height of the controversy over these films, Armida registered a negative 38 percent acceptance rating, perhaps the lowest of a public official in memory. But alas, people's memory is short, and now she has the temerity to run for Congress in Makati.

* * *

If there's a perpetual quarrel between the artist and the movie public, there's also the tug of war between the artist and the producer. The story is told about how the late National Artist Rolando Tinio confronted producer Lily Monteverde after she told him how to handle a movie scene. "*Marunong ka palang mag-sulat ng script*," said Tinio. "*Ikaw na lang ang sumulat. Magaling ka pala, eh.*" When the movie "Sutla" became highly controversial, its multi-awarded scriptwriter, Lualhati Bautista, was quoted as lamenting how the movie turned out so different from her script, thanks to the producers, one of whom was ex-President Estrada's brother, Jesse Ejercito.

* * *

Artists want full and untrammeled freedom of expression, but in some instances, their work is too bold for conventional society to accept. This is especially true of many films shown in family or community malls, which have become the national *pasyalan* and *istambayan* in every province. What bothers parents is that the bold movies are advertised and shown in the malls that are patronized by young people. On the other hand, there are those people like Times columnist Eric F. Mallonga, who resent and vigorously oppose the denial of their right to see or not to see the film of their choice, "because that decision had already been made for me by those who had unilaterally crowned themselves my moral guardians."

At this point, it is clear that there is a need for what Tiongson calls "special theaters for special shows," e.g., the avant-garde, experimental or bold films. Such special venues could satisfy the artists' demand for artistic expression as well as the moviegoers who seek out such genre. At the same time parents could relax in the feeling that the family malls remain "sanitized." I recall that former Censors Chief Manoling Morato had recommended to the Senate setting up about five special theaters, but the movie producers shot down the idea, because they feared they won't make money from movies this way. Maybe this idea could be given serious thought.

* * *

The chaplain of our pilgrimage group to the Holy Land last October, scriptural scholar Fr. Renato Jose E. Lopez, is inviting interested parties to a Lenten recollection, a "Christ-centered encounter," this Saturday, March 31, 2001, at the "Private Garden" in Tagaytay City, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. A eucharistic Mass concludes the recollection. Father Lopez, who studied at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, obtained his License in Sacred Scripture in 1994 and is now working for his doctorate. Father Lopez will deal with the Letter of St. Francis to his lay followers and how it applies to modern Christians. The recollection, organized by Arlina Onglao of Journeys of Faith Inc., a company which handles Catholic pilgrimages and cruises, charges a fee of P500 per person, inclusive of lunch and snacks and use of facilities. I would recommend this recollection wholeheartedly as Father Lopez is a most competent speaker and authority on the Scripture, who makes the Bible come alive for everyone. For details, call Issa at 0917-534-1663; Niza 426-5388; Arlina 929-0144 and Marina 433-5368.

Kiko's campaign

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HE'S lost more than 10 pounds since the start of the campaign for the Senate, but Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan says that compared to the previous electoral contests where he took part, this first run for a national office is still a lot less draining. "At the national level, the struggle is more detached," he notes.

Though a veteran of campus politics at UP, Kiko's first stab at electoral office was for Quezon City councilor, harnessing a team of young volunteers from campuses and urban poor communities to help him win. When he then ran for Congress against now Quezon City mayoralty candidate Sonny Belmonte, Kiko counted on the same team, supplemented by friends he'd made as president of the National Movement of Young Legislators (NMYL). "The young folk cried their eyes out when we lost," recounts Rollie Fabi who worked in that campaign and now manages Kiko's present run. Some of these friends have been tapped anew for the current campaign, while others, already experienced local executives by now, help out in their areas.

The heated confrontations and emotions may not run so high in this campaign, but what Kiko must confront today are perceptions of people built on, it seems, impressions and images. An oft-heard comment is that he's "too ambitious," and should have tried to gain more experience as a local executive or congressman before seeking to join the Senate. "He stands a good chance of winning," remarked a woman I talked with recently. "But he will be pushing out weaker candidates (in the ruling coalition) who may be more experienced and qualified."

* * *

KIKO admits his original plan had been to contest the congressional seat he had failed to bag more than 10 years ago. But as he puts it, "events intervened," and when surveys showed he stood a good chance of winning a senatorial bid, he quickly revised his plans.

In the years since his first electoral defeat, Kiko concentrated on his law career and took on the new challenge of the media, becoming a radio-TV broadcaster long before he even met his wife, the award-winning "megastar" Sharon Cuneta. Kiko's popularity was based on his ability to discuss legal matters on air without getting drowned in legalese. People would call in with their legal problems, and he would offer either advice or direct legal aid. It also didn't hurt that because of his ABS-CBN connections, he got entangled in several prominent cases, most memorable of which was lawyering for a witness in what became known as the Kuratong Baleleng "rubout" case. It is this media exposure that probably gave Kiko a national profile and that now makes his senatorial bid a fairly sure thing.

But why should lack of experience be a point against him? Aren't other candidates similarly wanting in legislative experience? Kiko at least has a stint in the Quezon City council in his resumé. As for being young, the candidate thinks this is not a liability. It is precisely the reason he believes he deserves a seat in the Senate. "Political development was stunted because of martial law," he observes, "and it's really about time a new generation of politicians be given the chance to evolve a new politics."

* * *

WHICH brings us to the campaign being waged by the People Power Coalition and its supposed reliance on old, discredited gimmicks, such as the use of entertainers (and entertainment) to draw the crowds at the expense of a serious discussion of the issues.

In this, Kiko and Ralph Recto, who happen to be the two youngest candidates in the PPC slate, are singled out for particular attention, and only because they happen to be married to two of the country's most popular and accomplished actresses. While Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto has yet to join a PPC outing, Sharon has mounted a PPC rally stage at least three times since the start of the campaign. For this the two have been criticized for "riding on" on the popularity of their wives to win votes

Kiko belies the "*trapo*" label attached to the PPC campaign. "I can understand the screams and cheers that greet me- -after all, my wife has many fans. But how do you explain the cheers for Joker Arroyo? The only way I can explain it is that the people are looking for heroes, and in Arroyo, they found a hero during the impeachment hearings."

He even claims to use his "link" with Sharon as a chance to educate voters. "I don't deny that I am married to a very popular actress," says Kiko, "but I always remind people that that's not the reason they should vote for me, or for anyone else. Popularity should not be the only reason you will vote for a candidate. Other things, such as competence, ability, honesty, are more important."

* * *

SHARON walks in toward the end of breakfast, quickly whipping out family pictures when asked about her and Kiko's baby, three-month old Frankie who is, says Sharon, "as big as a six-month-old baby."

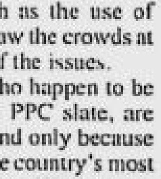
With some excitement, Kiko tells us about an upcoming TV ad that was recently shot in their Wack-Wack home. "I'm shown talking to someone who cannot be seen. I'm talking about the future, and what I want to do for the country as a senator. Then Sharon's voice is heard offscreen: 'Who are you talking to Kiko?' she asks. 'Ah,' I say, 'just talking to Frankie,' and she comes into view." At this, he breaks out in a smile even brighter than that adorning those countless campaign posters.

Though he is the politician in the family, Kiko has clearly learned ways of coping with relentless public attention from his wife, whose presence is enough to lure even physicians meeting in a nearby function room. And one lesson must have been to accept blessings as they are, without apologies or excuses.

Campaign ads

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo



I CAUGHT a number of campaign ads on television the other day and I could see that these things have gotten better over the years, not necessarily in substance but in their technical quality. And also in the way the candidates have squeezed out every drop, drawn out every little morsel from what they make us believe is the essence of their platform and practically shove it into our open mouths. Most of them are really all bluff and bluster—or, to put it bluntly, *bola*—so that the candidates' faces, voices and names would be recalled and then translated into written letters that form syllables that form words—that are their names. In short, they are saying, vote for me, I will remember you forever. Jeez.

The campaign posters are not any better. Everything is aimed at name recall, even just letter or syllable recall. *Maalaala lang.* For example, one candidate is using the angular shape of the first letter of his name to frame his face. I experience vertigo when I see rows and rows of it on the walls. Still, that could spell victory. See, I'm recalling...

The disgraced Erap's wife is into syllables too. Loi says *Ituloy ang* whatever. I thought, *itu-Loi ang pagpapaapi sa asawa?* The reelectionists are pleading to be sent back to the Senate. *Ibalik daw.* To some, I wanna scream, *ibalibag*. Here's mud in your eyes.

True-blue nationalist Bobby Tañada's catchphrase is "*Tapat sa Tao.*" Ta-ñada, "ta" as in *tapat.* The power of the syllable again. I'm voting for Tañada, and you should, too, but I told his campaign guys to think of something that moves, jumps, roars. *Tapat sa tao* translates as loyal to the people. So tell me, what exactly does that mean? It is formless, like a cloud floating in early July. Even Jesus Christ would not use that. Learn from the guy, he was a great communicator. He used strong images: the sower, the good Samaritan, the good shepherd, whitened sepulchres, wolves in sheep's clothing. (The last one's anti-wolf though and is politically incorrect.)

When I was in Nicaragua many years ago, I learned a Mass song that said, "*Cristo el tayacan, el tayacan.*" *Tayacan,* I was told, was an Indian word for bull, *toro*. It suggested power, strength, manliness. You sang that song until your chest gave out, the guitar strings snapped, the drums broke and the *desaparecidos* rose from the dead.

Words and the images they represent could be powerful. I wonder why many candidates aren't more original and daring. Is Magsaysay using the "Mambo Magsaysay" that Raul Manglapus composed for his father? It may sound *baduy* but the *baduy* lives on and becomes part of pop culture. They're hard to forget, like Yoyoy Villame's songs. Like "*Ibalik ang swerti*" and "*walang iwanan*" and "Hello, Billy." Like reelectionist Juan Flavier's "Let's DOH it." Do what?

I hope no one does a repeat of that TV campaign ad that showed a moist-eyed candidate holding a Bible and bathed in a heavenly glow. He even threw in a few chirping birds. That was *kadiri*. The Pope did better when he was younger. He ski-ed, jogged. Campaign *kadiri,* too, was this candidate who wiped his fermenting sweat with a towel then tossed it to the shrieking crowd. Why not his socks too? At least Mike Velarde throws only white hankies with *kalamansi*.

I would like to see candidates go to that part of Cavite where fishermen are fishing out garbage, not edible stuff, from the sea. I would like to listen to what these candidates have to say to the heaving sea and to these fishermen who are up in arms as well as to the dumpsters who dump their filth in the night. I would like to see candidates visit the North Cemetery where hundreds of families live among the dead and where children sleep on cold tombs and in empty graves.

I would like to see candidates visit Barangay San Jose in Quezon City's first district (Rep. Rey Calalay's) so they would smell the uncollected garbage in some parts and the clogged canals in other parts. There they could marvel at the paved streets in sections where the countless poor reside and at the huge potholes on the unpaved streets where hardworking taxpayers live.

I would like to see candidates go to that part of Mindoro where Mangyans are being denied their right to till and own the land by a government school. I would like to see them visit the Cavite Export Processing Zone and the towns surrounding it. I would like these candidates to learn about pawning ATM cards and how workers sleep in their common bunk beds in shifts. I would like them to visit and campaign in that portion of the South Superhighway where water thieves do business in a big way.

Joker Arroyo was very imaginative and daring when he jumped into jeepneys and surprised passengers (and a few bag slashers probably) with his handshakes. Why doesn't he try the LRT, the MRT and the killer buses on Edsa, too?

* * *

Lugaw muna. Friends of Bayan Muna (among them, Nini Quezon-Avanceña) are inviting the generous to a *lugaw* party at the San Loreno Village Clubhouse in Makati at 6 p.m. today. Bayan Muna is a party-list contender for the House of Representatives.

Now that Estrada is out, the organizers say, there is an even greater need to pursue the vision for the country. Foremost is the demand for justice, particularly the arrest and prosecution of Estrada and his accomplices for their crimes against the people. Just as urgent is the need to work for social reforms and addressing the root causes of social problems.

I believe Bayan Muna can make a difference in Congress. By the way, it is one of the few people's organizations behind People Power II that did not seek a reward or position in the new government.

With the *lugaw* is "an hour-long, entertaining and stress-free program" by selfless artists. Tickets sell at P1,000 each.

Homecoming tales and religion blues

YOUNGBLOOD

Maya Flaminda Javellana Vandenbroeck

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I'M an NPA and I'm glad about it. (NPA, as in, no permanent address, get it?) I was born in Mindanao but spent half of my childhood in the Netherlands and the other half in a remote town in the Visayas before eventually returning to Mindanao. After living for many years in Europe, it felt good to return to the Philippines, but I had to make some major adjustments at home, in school and especially with regard to religion.

Coming home meant having someone to do all the cooking, washing and cleaning—chores that middle-class families in the Netherlands do themselves. It meant holding on to my father's motorbike as we zigzagged to school at break-neck speed without fear of being stopped by traffic cops. It meant walking into our neighbors' living room anytime to watch television without having to go through the elaborate ritual of asking permission.

After class, my brother and I would join the neighborhood kids and play *patintero* on the street till we were covered with dust. Before dinner, my family would admire the green tunnel of *madre de cacao* trees as we strolled to the beach with towels draped over our shoulders. We would swim and shout to our hearts content in the Sulu Sea, pausing only to make a countdown of the colorful setting of the sun.

Living in this paradise also meant that I had to learn English, Tagalog and Kiniray-a all at the same time. It meant pretending not to notice other people staring at me like I was some bizarre half-breed (my father's Belgian).

There were the unbearable heat and the greedy flies and mosquitoes that feasted on me. And I also had to get used to drinking powdered milk, after having fresh milk since I could remember.

Perhaps because the peso was worth so much more when they last lived in the Philippines, my parents gave me an allowance so meager that I had to spend every snack break watching my classmates happily fill themselves with delicious junk food. I seldom complained for I reasoned that a measly pack of chips and soft drinks wouldn't satiate my hunger anyway.

Though I didn't show it, I had the longest time getting used to the unusual religiosity of the people. Compared to the reserved Dutch, Filipinos were more showy about practicing their religion. A day didn't go by without someone making the sign of the cross or mentioning something about their faith, God, Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary.

The idea of studying in a Catholic school seemed to be no big deal to me, except for that part about wearing a uniform. I was told this was to "prevent richer students from flaunting their expensive clothes and making the poorer students feel inferior." How sensitive of them, I thought, but my admiration vanished when I remembered that I had to wake up at six in the morning and go home at five in the afternoon after spending several hours copying lessons from the blackboard.

I got headaches from having to memorize exact definitions of terms only to forget them after the exams, not to mention the loads of homework I had to do. It was certainly not easy being a fifth grader in the Philippines.

The biggest shock was having to pray before and after every subject What an entirely new way to go through the day! I just wished they didn't pray so fast, like they were in a rush to get it over with.

The praying didn't end in the classroom. My clever teacher checked our attendance to make sure we didn't skip Mass on Sundays. Being the grade-conscious freak that I was, I had no choice but to politely listen to the priest's monologues.

My classmates talked about growing horns if they even missed just one homily. Remembering that in the Netherlands I went to church only during the weddings and baptisms of my relatives, I thought my horns must be huge indeed. Still it was the never-ending standing up and sitting down during Mass that got into my nerves.

Some of our religion teachers had a way of telling us what to believe and what not to believe in a tone that said, "Don't you dare contradict me." Doubts were dismissed with the reminder that "the teachings of the church cannot be questioned."

But how could I possibly accept what they were telling me when they didn't even want to listen to what I had to say? What happened to critical thinking?

To save myself the embarrassment of being put on the spot, I pretended to agree by nodding my head once in a while like everybody else I played this part to the hilt even during tests by writing answers that the teachers wanted to read but which were not exactly how I felt. The more "saintly" the explanation, the higher the score, I soon discovered.

Ever since Papa started reading to my brother and me from the "Children's Picture Bible," I grew up thinking that the story of creation was just, well, a wonderful story. It was a major culture shock to find out that my classmates and teachers believed the world really was created in six days and that Adam and Eve really were the first man and woman.

What about the Big Bang? That is only a theory. What about the fossils? Oh, God put them on earth to test our faith. No "superior" human being would want to admit his ancestors were some dumb and ugly apes who got tired of swinging from trees.

The religion lessons left me confused for a while. It came to a point when I began to envy my classmates' unwavering faith. They were so sure of everything.

Nevertheless, all the church-going, was not in vain. I learned some nice songs.

My family is not irreligious. We make it a point to pray before dinner, thanking the farmers and fisher folk for the food on the table. have also the habit of trying to pray before sleeping, though always with the door locked. I would lie down and ask myself, "Okay, whom did I hurt today?" I would then admit that I should not have said this but I should have said that and feel guilty the rest of the night. I end my prayer by saying, "Please help me be a good girl tomorrow."

Even in my fourth year of college, religion was still very much on my mind. The Catholic university that I went to required Theology to be taught to Christians and non-Christians alike. No one was exempted. Thank God my last teacher approached the subject as "a sharing of religious experiences." My heart throbbed in frustration no more.

According to one teacher, religion is supposed to help people "avoid misunderstanding in a world that is shrinking toward one global community." Nice words. But since I was studying in a Catholic school, the "sharing of religious experiences" was always done from a Catholic point of view, which helped a lot in making me know almost nothing about Islam.

The Filipino youth, especially in Mindanao, should not grow up ignorant of Islam. We should read books about it. We should interact much more with the Muslim communities around us and visit their mosques. Better still, we should be taught about Islam in class. And while they're at it, why not teach us a little bit of Hinduism, Buddhism Shintoism, etc., since we're Asians too?

Teachers should give the world's religions equal emphasis and let the students discover how they are alike in many ways. Meaning, teachers should resist the urge to impose their own beliefs. College students are old enough to make up their own minds.

A course in comparative religions will lead to understanding and eventually respect for other people's culture. This cannot be possible if we breathe only one religion all the time. Who knows, this might even be part of the long-term solution to the problem affecting this "Land of Promise" which I plan to make my permanent address?

Maya Flaminda Javellana Vandenbroeck, 19, graduated last week with a Communication Arts degree from the Ateneo de Davao University.

Important things

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE wrote me to ask why I was spending so much time on the issue of "Live Show" when there were more important things to talk about.

Pray, what are more important things to talk about? The elections? The elections mean nothing if we cannot understand so basic a thing as justice. The elections mean nothing if we cannot understand so basic a thing as freedom. The elections mean nothing if we cannot understand so basic a thing as right and wrong.

What has been done to "Live Show" is an injustice. What has been done to "Live Show" is an abridgement of our freedom. What has been done to "Live Show" in the name of morality is an immoral act. Protesting it is not merely something we owe to Joey Reyes or Nick Tiongson, though heaven knows we owe them much, the first for courageously trying to expose the ills of our society, the second for courageously defending it at the cost of his job and reputation. It is something we owe ourselves. It is something we owe our children.

Anding Roces, the new MTRCB head, says "Live Show" is nothing but "pornography for pornography's sake" and hopes Philippine movies will reclaim their previous splendor. They won't. Not if that's the kind of critical judgment they can expect from people who ought to know better. It's a dark day for Philippine art and movies when the head of the MTRCB cannot distinguish a serious movie from trash. Can Roces be so desperate to have a job like this that he must stoop to the level of the no-read-no-write around him? He says he's been around and he's no prude. Well, you wonder what movies he's seen over the last 20 years if that's the case. They can't include "The Last Tango In Paris." And I don't know which is worse, being prudish or being jaded.

You get all the national artists to say their piece about "Live Show," and you will be hard put to find one of them who will share Roces' view. F. Sionil Jose, the new national artist for the literature, may wish to do so posthaste. The way things are going, Roces may also find his novel, "Sins," which teems with sex, often graphically depicted—the book deals with the excesses of the elite, in particular with a character not unlike Andres Soriano—pornography for pornography's sake.

Art can and should uplift. But it may not do so by ignoring the sordid realities of life, by prettifying the ugly, by offering "feel good" or happy endings to stories. That is not art, that is PR. That is not even Christian, that is Philistine. Art may uplift only by telling the truth about life. Life does offer much to cheer about, but you do not just see that in stories about people who go from rags to riches, or stories about heroes defeating villains. You see that in stories about people learning to care for each other amid the direst circumstances, in people showing fortitude in the face of the bleakest future. Christianity does not say "The Ping Lacson Story" will set you free. It says truth shall set you free.

Frankly, I cannot understand how we keep complaining about the iniquities that keep happening around us when we keep letting iniquity pass us blithely by without protest. Indeed, when we keep making *balato* of every iniquity, particularly where they mean taking on powerful people and institutions, and saying, ah, but life must go on.

Well, life does **not** go on when founded on wrongs, death does. The phrase, "Let's pick our fights" or "Let's choose our battles" simply means let us not waste energies on petty things but fight the big fights. There is nothing petty about calling a serious movie a voyeur's delight and calling one of the country's best directors a pornographer. There is nothing petty in asking for the head of one of the country's most respected art critics and cultural historians because he begs to disagree with that idiocy. There is nothing petty in allowing ignorant moralists, power-tripping church officials, and inquisitorial censors to dictate what we may or may not watch. That is not a fight or battle you may ignore. That is the big fight.

We do not want to complain about oppression when it happens to others, let us not complain about oppression when it happens to us.

Which brings me to ask what the People Power Coalition candidates, the candidates who invoke the spirit of what we, the people—and not Jaime Cardinal Sin, and not Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—had just wrought, are doing about it. Thank God, there is Joker Arroyo (no relation to Ms Macapagal) whose instincts remain libertarian and who promptly questioned the murder of "Live Show." What of the others? "We will suspend judgment until we see the movie," they say. What a wimpy answer. Pray, when will you see the movie? Next year? More admirable the people like Liwayway Cható and Jun Magsaysay who immediately proclaimed their support for Sin. At least, they are willing to take sides.

You can understand that most of them do not want to displease Sin. But then you start wondering why you should vote for people who do not want to displease Sin. You cannot stand for principle when it is hardest to do so—and there is no other kind; embracing justice when it is convenient is called opportunism—you will just be another decoration in a Senate already full of them.

Which leads me too to ask what the seeming progressives in government are doing about it. I've always thought that the problem with putting progressives in government is that they do not make government progressive, they merely want to progress governing. What happened to all those stirring words I read in the e-mail about building a new world, one that would push back injustice and hypocrisy, one that would never again—that was the battle cry, never again—allow any tyrant, in *barong Tagalog* or cassock, with *bigote* or with lupus, to loom in the horizon again? Why the sudden, abysmal, Lenten silence? Wasn't this the same thing we were saying about the seeming progressives who worked with Erap? That their silence abetted tyranny, that their sleeping with injustice screwed up freedom, that their belief that dying today would help them live to fight another day betrayed common sense?

Reyes was one of those who thought we'd build a better world, and worked tirelessly, indefatigably, to enlist the movie folk to fight Erap when it was suicide for them to do so. And we ask to make a *balato* of him. And we ask to make a sacrifice of him at the altar of the god of "More Important Things." I've always thought the day I started worrying about losing my job was the day I started planting *camote*.

But I would be insulting *camote* farmers. They at least are doing far more important things.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

Long live the (natural) family!

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

AT LAST, one group has come out with a concrete proposal to uphold the Filipino family and religious freedom. A group called Educhild Foundation Inc., described as an "association of parents, educators and other concerned citizens," has produced a "Legislative Agenda on the Family" which it hopes all candidates for Congress will adopt.

The agenda has eight main points covering different concerns, much too long to discuss in this column, but I wanted to focus on some of the more pressing issues they raise, especially as they relate to my area of work, which is public health.

What I found most striking was a proposal to make it illegal to require any public officer or employee "to participate, contribute, assist or cooperate in the implementation of population control programs contrary to his religious convictions."

I am thrilled by this proposal (but hope they will not forget "her" religious convictions as well). If indeed this law is passed, then people should now be able sue local officials who ban artificial contraception from government services, as has been done in the city of Manila by Mayor Lito Atienza and the province of Laguna by then Governor (now Interior Secretary) Joey Lina. Under Educhild's proposed law, non-Catholics (as well as many Catholics) can sue local governments for imposing a program that deprives them of family planning services they need and which are part and parcel of their religious beliefs.

Educhild has another provision on "childhood education" which talks about "the natural and primary right and duty of parents in the rearing of youth," and proposes legislation that will allow parents to exclude their child from a school's sex-education programs if these violate the family's, parents' or children's faith or religious convictions, with a concomitant undertaking of the parents to impart this education at home.

Again I checked with my lawyer friends and they agree that this would be a major breakthrough, allowing parents to withdraw their children from classes that preach misogynist (anti-women) tenets, such the one that says that a woman's virginity is her "greatest gift" to her husband. The law could be used as well against schools that propagate homophobic or anti-homosexual attitudes since many people feel this type of intolerance violates their religious beliefs.

Stretched a bit further, if a school does not have sex education at all, parents can sue the school to offer such programs, on the grounds that their religious convictions make it imperative for schools to give sex education as a way of inculcating healthy and responsible moral values.

Educhild also proposes "a confirmation and reaffirmation of the natural family." Although Educhild insists that marriage is a "socially privileged institution for the joining of man and woman for society's perpetuation," my lawyer friends will gladly use this law to fight the discrimination that exists today against single-parent families as well as families headed by same-sex couples.

Let me elaborate. Since Educhild is so concerned about the "natural family," lawyers can cite "nature" to show that out there among animal species, most families are actually headed by a female, as a single parent or as part of a communal group. With very few exceptions, males in the animal kingdom (including Homo sapiens, I sometimes suspect) are really quite useless creatures, there only to inseminate and contributing almost nothing to "society's perpetuation." Upholding a "natural family" will mean an end to some Catholic schools' discriminatory practice of banning children of divorced or separated parents. In many cases, the children are in their mother's custody, which, if you think about it, comes much closer to what the "natural" family is, yet the schools ban such children from enrolling.

As I mentioned earlier, if we are to look at nature, we will find that parenting is often handled by females, and in a same-sex communal group. Moreover, same-sex coupling is very common, as has been extensively documented in many scholarly articles for hundreds of species of birds, mammals, even fish. In some species, the couples stay together until one partner dies. Many same-sex pairs of birds even build nests, acquire eggs to hatch and raise "foster children." Using these fascinating examples from nature, upholding the natural family could mean legalizing same-sex unions.

(I write all this crossing my legs, hoping that Educhild will be kind to the men even if in nature his role is often limited to insemination, and being executed after that contribution.)

Educhild's proposed legislative agenda have mind-boggling potentials. It includes a "pro-family tax policy" that will propose a tax deduction for "same-home" care of parents, grandparents and elderly relatives as a way of "ennobling the tradition of reverence and respect." This will be a breakthrough for many people who remain single such as maiden aunts and bachelor uncles, gay sons and lesbian daughters. They are often the ones who bear the main responsibilities of supporting and caring for their elderly relatives. At long last, society will recognize that it is not only in biological procreation that human beings contribute to humanity.

I have to admit I was surprised to read about the Educhild proposal in the column of Bernardo Villegas, one of Opus Dei's most prominent members. I had always thought the Opus Dei was homophobic, misogynist and opposed to religious freedom. Of course, I do not know if Educhild is Opus Dei but the mere fact that Villegas featured its agenda suggests that some of these groups' members do support the efforts to save the natural family and uphold religious freedom. Let us extend our wholehearted and unflinching support to Educhild's noble legislative agenda.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.org

LETTERS

A good 'finishing school' for candidates

THIS is neither a complaint nor a grievance. It is a big thank you. The article by Juliet L. Javellana on 'PPC bets learn winning tips in finishing school'" was simply beautiful and heartwarming.

These people, several of whom we watched and admired during the mpeachment trial, can be students again, young at heart and stand before a coach to let her critique their peaking styles! And just like fine tudents who will make the mark, hey accept the tips with childlike implicity. It is all very refreshing! My friends and I immensely enoyed reading the article.

Someone learned the importance of body language, another is willing to give up his Hawaiian shirts, one (perhaps the most admired of all) will try to overcome his stage fright, someone will try not to slouch, and still another will try psyching herself up to project a "star quality." All are willing to use the powdered paper packets to take the shine off their faces. Caution on too much jewelry for the women. Beautiful!

There is no element of pretense in these people. This is what happens when the interior being is healthy and clean. I believe that the most important thing is what a candidate has to say (granted that she/he means to do it) and that there should be no mudslinging or character assassinations. As President Macapagal admonishes, let there be no song-and-dance gimmick of the old politics. If there is to be entertainment, let us have beautiful Philippine dances in the style of the Bayanihan troupe. Let there be simple music concerts with typical Filipino instruments. This will help the people love and admire their country.

Kudos to Lupita Kashiwahara for conducting this "finishing school."

Now I know that there is another good Aquino aside from Cory, Ninoy and Paul. *Animo!*—**CONCEPCION B. BANAAG, Unit 7, San Juan Town Homes, 140 Argonne corner Vargas Streets, San Juan, Metro Manila**

Questions too interesting to disregard

WOULD like to comment on the nteresting article of N.G. Ayeng. Youngblood, 3/8/01)

Ayeng was angry at the "clueless liens" of the foreign press for their unfair coverage of People Power II. This reminds me of the politician who is always in favor of the freedom of the press—until the press tarts to criticize him.

Ayeng, with all her youthful energy, should be careful about the ight of the press, local or foreign, to express opinions about events and look behind her excitement over the uccess of People Power II.

Every foreign newspaper or magazine I have been able to read agreed that getting rid of Estrada was probably the best thing that could have happened to the Philippines and that Estrada, from the start, was not fit for the job and was a real disgrace for the Philippines. That was fair coverage from my point of view.

Their questions about the democratic process, which caused the ire of Ayeng, however, are too interesting to be dismissed as unfair coverage. Is it a democratic process if one million Filipinos in the streets put a stop to a decision made by 10 million Filipinos only two years earlier? More important, where does that Edsa voting system lead us?

This was the same question put forward by Singapore's former prime minister to all Asian countries, and not only the Philippines.

With an open mind, Filipinos should start questioning the "democratic voting system" imposed upon them. Estrada himself symbolizes the failure of the democratic electoral process.

The coming elections will, once more, put on stage actors, dancing and singing senators, human rights violators, wives of ex-presidents with the same record as corrupt, intellectually unfit, bad moral characters, machos, goons, and they will end up as our leaders as surely as if it were written in stone.

The very interesting question arising from People Power II is how to recognize the failure of the democratic voting process to scrutinize and select competent leaders and to find ways of bringing back voting power to the people. Maybe we should look into ways of reinventing democracy through the use of the Internet and cell phones and opinion surveys.

Democracy is the worst of all systems, except all the other systems.—**RAYMOND COLET, Ermita, Manila**

Work cut out for national leaders

WOULD like to thank your paper, particularly columnist Rina Jimenez-David, for helping publicize timely indings from a recent survey by Pulse Asia on Filipino public opinion egarding family planning and eproductive health. Her column in the INQUIRER properly asks whether government—and media—ever situate public issues where they also might rightly belong among the people themselves, given their clear perspectives and their clearly acknowledged preferences.

Like David, we at Pulse Asia would like policymakers to heed public sentiments when crafting policies and programs on vital national issues. A democracy endures best when leaders listen to the people, even as the traditionally better organized and the socially more entrenched few are not—and cannot be—ignored.

As an academic person, may I also note that the excellent definition of leadership attributed to me by David—"finding yourself a parade and placing yourself ahead of it"—came from John Naisbitt, a trenchant futurologist who, in the early 1980s, identified people-powered, participatory democracy as one of 10 "megatrends" transforming people's lives in America.

In the Philippines of 2001 and beyond, our political leaders must increasingly acknowledge the popular underpinnings of many progressive causes and act in support of these constituencies. To do otherwise is to assist in aborting an emergent participatory democracy in this country and to work for the perpetuation of a historically self-serving, so-called democracy of the elite.—**FELIPE B. MIRANDA, president, Pulse Asia**

When will Eastern Visayas get gov't attention?

THE LAST survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations showed that the degree of acceptance of the Macapagal administration was 61 ercent nationwide.

This, of course, varies from region to region. Surprisingly, in Luzon and Metro Manila which was the center of Edsa II, the degree of acceptance of the present administration was only 50 percent.

It will be recalled that after she ook her oath, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo declared time and again that the focus of her attention would be Mindanao. And yet, the rate of her acceptance in Mindanao was only 55 percent. In fact, the Mindanao voters are not just sympathizing with he opposition, they are aggressively anti-Macapagal as shown in the People Power Coalition team's sortie to the Cagayan de Oro market where they were booed and snubbed.

And yet, despite (and because?) of the fact that she is accepted least in Mindanao, the President has, indeed, focused her attention on Mindanao, and many of her key men do come from Mindanao. These are Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona Jr., Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong, Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez, Presidential Adviser for Regional Development Paul Dominguez and Presidential Assistant for Western Mindanao Jesus Dureza.

The biggest surprise in the same SWS survey are the results in the Visayas, including Eastern Visayas, where 71 percent of the people accept the Macapagal administration. And yet what has the President done for us? Or do the Visayans need to be aggressive like some people of Mindanao so that she will turn her attention to the Visayans, especially Leyte and Samar, and give them her blessings?

Indeed, we, the people of Eastern Visayas, envy the people of Mindanao for the blessings the President has showered on them. Yet, survey after survey has found Eastern Visayas to be among the most depressed regions.

And yet the region is rich in natural resources. Do you know that there are uranium deposits in Samar? Do you know Balite, Villaba, Leyte has the only rock asphalt deposit in the Far East and it is one of the best in the world? The government can save hundreds of millions of pesos annually by using this rock asphalt.

When will the government give serious attention to Eastern Visayas?—**AURELIO D. MENZON, Ground Floor, Bayantel Bldg., J. Romualdez Street, Tacloban City**

Miriam is no Harvard alumna

I FULLY agree with the sentiments Conrado de Quiros expressed in his column last Feb. 27. May I just point out that based on the Harvard University's own records, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago is definitely **not** an alumna of Harvard.

Don't take my word for it. I contacted the Harvard University Alumni Records Office by telephone (617-495-2371) to verify if she has alumnus status at any of the faculties here. She does not. For your reference, this hotline service is provided by the university primarily as an easy way to counter fraud.

I feel duty-bound to make this clarification in the light of the senator's statements to the media which tend to misrepresent Filipinos who actually are Harvard alumni or are now enrolled here. Contrary to the senator 's statements, a fundamental part of the learning experience here at Harvard is the respectful discussion and deliberation of all views, no matter how radical or provocative. No Harvard alumnus or student, in his or her right mind, would go to the level of labeling another person an "anonymous little insect" simply because he or she disagrees with that person.

It has also been reported that Santiago claims alumnus status by virtue of attending a summer workshop of the Program of Instruction for Lawyers offered by the Harvard Law School. Assuming that this indeed is true, please note that this lecture and discussion series is an extension service of the university that is open to the public (even non-lawyers) on a space-available basis at the law school campus each summer and the first week of November every year. It in no way confers alumnus status on anyone who attends it. In other words, as long as a seat is available (the waiting list for the mediation workshop in particular is currently three years) and you can pay, you can go. No grades are given during this series and participants are provided with certificates of attendance. Assuming therefore that the senator actually visited the campus to attend this series, she cannot on this fact alone expressly or even impliedly claim that she studied at the Harvard Law School. More information on this extension service of the university is readily available online at http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/PIL/.

If I may borrow De Quiros' words, what we apparently have here is not "signature folly" but a case of "counterfeit goods." I only wish to make it clear that not only is the claim made by the claimant here wrong, but the claimant herself is in no way representative of the class she seems so desperate to be identified with.

I therefore have sent this e-mail so that this matter can be brought to light and properly clarified.—**TEODORO KALAW IV, 3322A Holmes Mail Center, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA 02138**

Gloria suspends Napocor power surcharges

BY GERRY T. PAGHARION
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced the suspension of the imposition of the Power Purchase Adjustment (PPA), which has caused furor among power consumers in the country.

"I have instructed the Napocor to temporarily suspend the PPA imposition but I appeal to you to support the government and the power sector bill," the President said during yesterday's multisectoral assembly held at the grounds of the Roxas Memorial Provincial Hospital here.

She said decision to suspend the imposition of the PPA was reached in December last year by the previous administration.

Ms Macapagal, however, explained, the decision was not implemented due to "time lag." She did not elaborate.

The PPA is a surcharge passed on by Napocor to electric companies to cover the increase in the cost of fuel, power generated by independent power producers, and the rising foreign exchange rate. The electric companies, in turn, pass these surcharges on to the consumers.

President Macapagal's call for support of the Omnibus Power Bill is a 180-degree turn from her previous pronouncement, made only a few days after she assumed the presidency, that the government would shelve the controversial measure.

The President's announcement came amid the furor caused by the PPA all over the country, particularly in Bacolod City where residents resorted to a voluntary one-hour power shut-off starting Monday night to protest the imposition, which amounted to 72 percent of the basic rate.

Although the announcement of the suspension was greeted by a resounding applause in this capital city, the Catholic Church-backed group in Negros Occidental vowed to continue its protest against the PPA.

"We are not just asking for a suspension, which is temporary. We are asking for the abolition of the PPA," said Fr. Greg Patino, Negros Consumers Watch Council (NCWC) chair.

He said they would continue one-hour power shut-off from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., which would be capped with a province-wide rally in Bacolod on Friday.

George Sanchez, NSWC vice chair, also said their group was also opposing the Omnibus Power Bill because they believed that Napocor's privatization would not bring down power bills.

Billy Iglesias, who represented the consumer sector in Antique, told the President during the dialogue that the 33,000 power consumers in Antique were asking the help of the President to abolish the PPA imposition.

The Capiz Electric Cooperative had also earlier sent a resolution to the President asking her to intervene in the PPA controversy.

Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias had also protested the imposition of the PPA. She wrote the President last week, asking her to intervene and stop Napocor from passing on the "prohibitive and increasing cost" of the PPA to the consumers.

Ms Macapagal, however, said in her speech here that the temporary suspension of PPAs would translate to about P400-million monthly losses on the part of the government-owned Napocor. This would mean, she stressed a "reduction" in other government services.

During the time of the suspension, she said "we would look into other alternatives or to find ways to make the impact of the PPA more humane and less abrupt to the Filipino consumers."

In asking for support to the power bill pending in Congress, Ms Macapagal said "the bill was the long term solution to the woes of the Napocor, which has been saddled with debts and problem in its cash flow."

The bill seeks, among others, to privatize the government-owned Napocor *With a report from Carla P. Gomez and Ma. Diosa Labiste, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Review of power contracts pressed

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy is dragging its feet in reviewing and renegotiating the contracts of the National Power Corp. with independent power producers (IPP) and House assistant majority leader Prospero A. Pichay Jr. suspects it is because an energy official is beholden to some IPPs.

Pichay (Lakas-NUCD, Surigao del Sur) also chided Energy Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho for deferring the review and renegotiation, saying that the review is "long overdue and should not be contingent on the passage of the Omnibus Power Bill."

The Lakas stalwart said that the Macapagal administration must have the political will to extricate the state-owned Napocor from its obligations to the IPPs instead of pursuing the passage of an inutile Omnibus Power Bill that would only exacerbate the economic woes faced by the ordinary Filipino consumer.

Back in the early 1990s, at the height of the power crisis, the National Economic Development Authority allowed Napocor to enter into contracts with only four to five IPPs to shore up its power supply after the 620 megawatt-Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) was mothballed, Pichay said.

However, the number of IPPs ballooned to 45 under the Ramos administration as of the end of 2000, Napocor has obligations amounting up to P70 billion for year 2001 alone, he said.

Pichay dared Camacho to review and renegotiate the power contract of Napocor with ALSONS Power Holding Co., an independent power company of the Alcantara group of companies, whose former president and chair, Mr. Nicasio I. Alcantara is now the chair of Petron Corp.

ALSONS owns and operates four IPPs in Mindanao which supply only 25 percent of its total contracted capacity of 248 megawatts for an estimated P5 billion annually, Pichay said.

Pichay said Napocor president Jesus Alcordo cannot objectively review the IPP contracts of the Aboitiz Group, which recommended him to the position.

Alcordo was also the Chief Executive Officer of East Asia Power Corp., which used to operate the Navotas Diesel Barges until its contract expired in 1999.

"Real reforms in the power industry will not take place by privatizing the cash-strapped Napocor. If the new administration is committed to the welfare of the masses, it should address the IPP problem squarely," Pichay explained. "They have to take the bull by the horn and amend the take-or-pay provisions in the IPP contracts instead of dilly-dallying pending congressional action."

You fight, we talk, NDF tells guerrillas

BY CARLITO PABLO AND C. V. ESGUERRA

EVEN as communist rebels and the government have agreed to resume formal peace negotiations, the chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines yesterday issued marching orders for the guerrillas to keep on fighting.

"We fight in the battlefield while our negotiators talk across the table," exhorted Armando Liwanag, believed to be the alias of CPP founding chair Jose Ma. Sison, on the eve of the 32nd founding anniversary today of the New People's Army, the CPP's military wing.

"There should be no illusion whatsoever that peace negotiations are the sole or main way of arriving at a just and lasting peace," Liwanag said in a 15-page statement.

Malacañang earlier announced that the stalled peace talks are to formally resume on April 27 in a neutral foreign venue, possibly Norway or Sweden.

Liwanag noted the government "will always try to win across the table what it cannot in the battlefield."

Unless revolutionary forces continue to wage armed struggle, "the enemy will find no need for peace negotiations," he said.

War strategy

The party's "war strategy" came in for strong criticism from a breakaway faction of the CPP which had a different sort of advice for the NPA on its 32nd anniversary.

The Revolutionary Proletarian Movement-Alex Boncayao Brigade yesterday said the NPA should shift its "barbaric" revolutionary strategy and focus on mass actions in line with the peace negotiations.

"The founding anniversary of the NPA is no more than a commemoration of terrorism and barbarism," said Campali Lualhati, commanding officer of the RPM-ABB.

"The real revolution must now begin through the painstaking organization of the working class and through the revolutionary mass movement," she said.

The group criticized the NPA for waging a long-running war in the countryside that has "killed and maimed thousands."

Lualhati said the party has sunk deeper into the war strategy as it resorted to "physical elimination and violent methods" in dealing with those with differing views.

Revolutionary taxes

She also criticized the NPA system of collecting revolutionary taxes in the provinces and alleged harassment of local political candidates and other organizations that do not support the group.

The RPM-ABB urged the NPA to stop its "violent" methods to ensure the success of the peace talks.

Liwanag noted that there are now 100 NPA guerrilla fronts operating in majority of the country's provinces, its armed might consisting of regular fighting units, people's militia, self-defense units and special commando units.

"We can gain at least 1,200 rifles per month or 14,400 rifles per year if on the average every guerilla front command succeeds in seizing even only 10 rifles from the enemy forces every month," Liwanag said.

He pointed out that the NPA can be flexible in the use of various sizes of units like teams, squads, platoons, half companies or companies to carry out tactical offensives like ambushes, raids and arrest operations.

Gov't to open Abubakar to rebs' kin

BY ARMAND N. NOCUM

THE GOVERNMENT will allow members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and their families to return to Camp Abubakar which, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday, is now known as a "Muslim community."

At the same time, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad advised leaders of the MILF to wage peace, not war, to attain progress in their localities.

In a press briefing, President Macapagal said the decision to allow the six towns in Camp Abubakar to be re-occupied was premised on the assumption that it is not a military camp.

"We fully acknowledge the desire of Filipino Muslims to be justly heard and to enjoy their unique cultural and religious identity," she said, as she announced the points of agreement in the accord signed between the government and the MILF in Malaysia.

"This agreement upholds the belief that areas such as Abubakar and Rajah Muda are not military camps but sites of Muslim communities that must be accorded respect like any other community of citizens," Ms Macapagal said.

When asked if the move was tantamount to giving the MILF back a camp which thousands of government soldiers died taking, the President said this was not so.

She said the phrase "giving it back" was "military language."

"It's not that way anymore. There are no sentries, you can go inside and there are families living there," she said

"Therefore, that whole language of returning it is not applicable. What we're doing is developing these communities," she said.

Eduardo Ermita, Presidential adviser on the peace process who led the government panel in the talks in Malaysia, said the idea of calling the camps Muslim communities came from Al Haj Murad, vice chair for military affairs of the MILF.

The President said the March 24 agreement with the MILF, known as the "General Framework for the Resumption of Peace Talks," provides for rehabilitation and development efforts in conflict areas to be initiated simultaneously with the talks. *Edwin O. Fernandez and Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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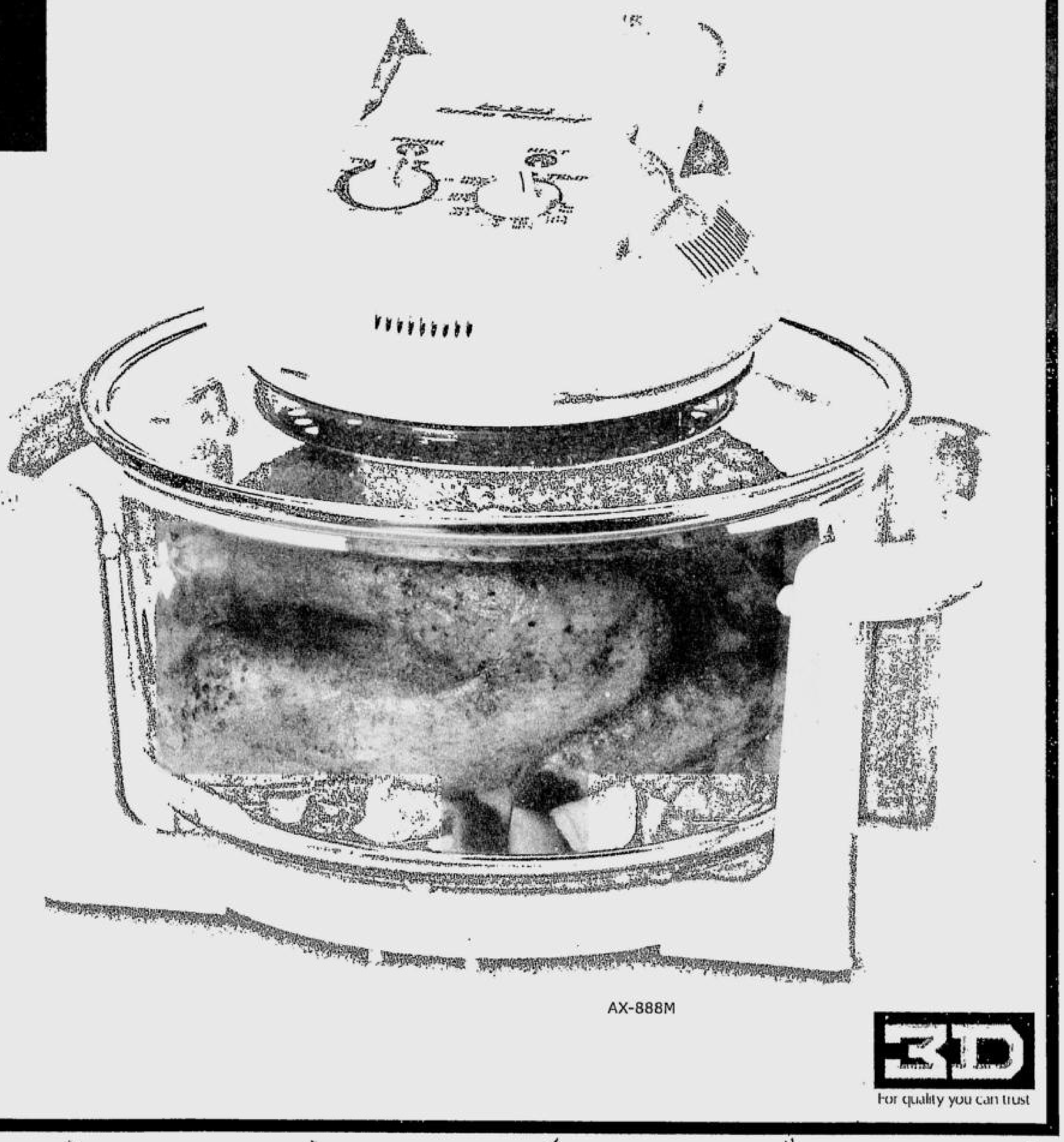
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US commander: Nokor threat grew

WASHINGTON—Gen. Thomas Schwartz, commander of the US forces in South Korea, told a congressional committee Tuesday that over the past year the military threat from North Korea had increased, despite the continuing famine there.

"The (military) threat is more serious today than it was last year when I testified," Schwartz told the US Senate's armed services committee. North Korea was "bigger, better, closer, deadlier," its armed forces were training at a higher level, and it continued to sell missiles abroad, he said.

Asked about the extent of famine in North Korea, Schwartz said that it was difficult to get accurate information on this.

The North Korean authorities had announced that 250,000 people had died of starvation over the past 18-24 months, he said.

"We have estimations up to one million died of starvation in the same period of time," Schwartz said. "It's serious, extensive and it's continuing."

Schwartz said military was waiting to be notified of any new policy focus by the administration of President George W. Bush.

"I would not recommend any kind of reduction of forces in the Korean Peninsula at this time," he told the senators, who were reviewing the US armed forces budget recommendations for the fiscal year beginning in October.

Some of the committee members were interested in identifying areas where the deployment of US forces abroad could be cut back. Schwartz acknowledged that the US commitment in South Korea represented a substantial demand on resources.

He argued for better pay and conditions for troops serving there, and said the plans to consolidate the 45 major US military installations in South Korea to 25 would enhance troops' quality of life and improve their security.

But any cutback in the numbers of US troops stationed in South Korea could only result from an improved political climate, Schwartz said: "If in the future, we go down the path of reconciliation (and) confidence-building measures that are verifiable and reciprocal, if we see that the North takes the actions, not the words . . . to reduce the threat, then there could be a concomitant reduction in troops."

On North Korea's missile exports, Schwartz said it had sold missiles to Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, and Egypt. North Korea was "the number-one proliferator of missiles in the world," he said.

However Admiral Dennis Blair, commander in chief of the US Pacific Command, told the committee that North Korea had continued to observe the moratorium on missile testing that has been in force in recent years, and therefore would not have had the opportunity to test the missiles.

"The moratorium on testing missiles, which the North Koreans have undertaken to maintain as long as negotiations with the United States continue, has in fact continued.

"And although the North Koreans seem uniquely capable of selling missiles which haven't been tested, and some fool countries seem uniquely capable of buying them, even though they don't know if the damn things work or not, they have not in fact fired them since that time," Blair said. *AFP*

Foot-and-mouth hits Argentina

BUENOS AIRES—Argentina's food safety agency reported Tuesday there were 78 confirmed areas where highly contagious foot-and-mouth disease had broken out nationwide, while Brazil deployed soldiers to prevent the illegal smuggling of cattle from its southern neighbor.

In a report on its website, the National Food Safety and Quality Service added 10 new sites to reports published Monday.

Another 38 regions have been classified as suspected outbreak areas. Last week 25 confirmed areas of infection and 28 suspected ones were listed.

Meanwhile, the outbreak is beginning to have an impact on Argentina's beef industry. Meat packer Swift Armour has laid off 1,150 of its 1,600 employees at its plant in Rosario, leading Santa Fe province Gov. Carlos Reutemann considering a state of emergency decree, a spokesperson said.

Business leaders and packing industry workers were scheduled to meet with Labor Minister Patricia Bullrich to follow up on the government's handling of the crisis.

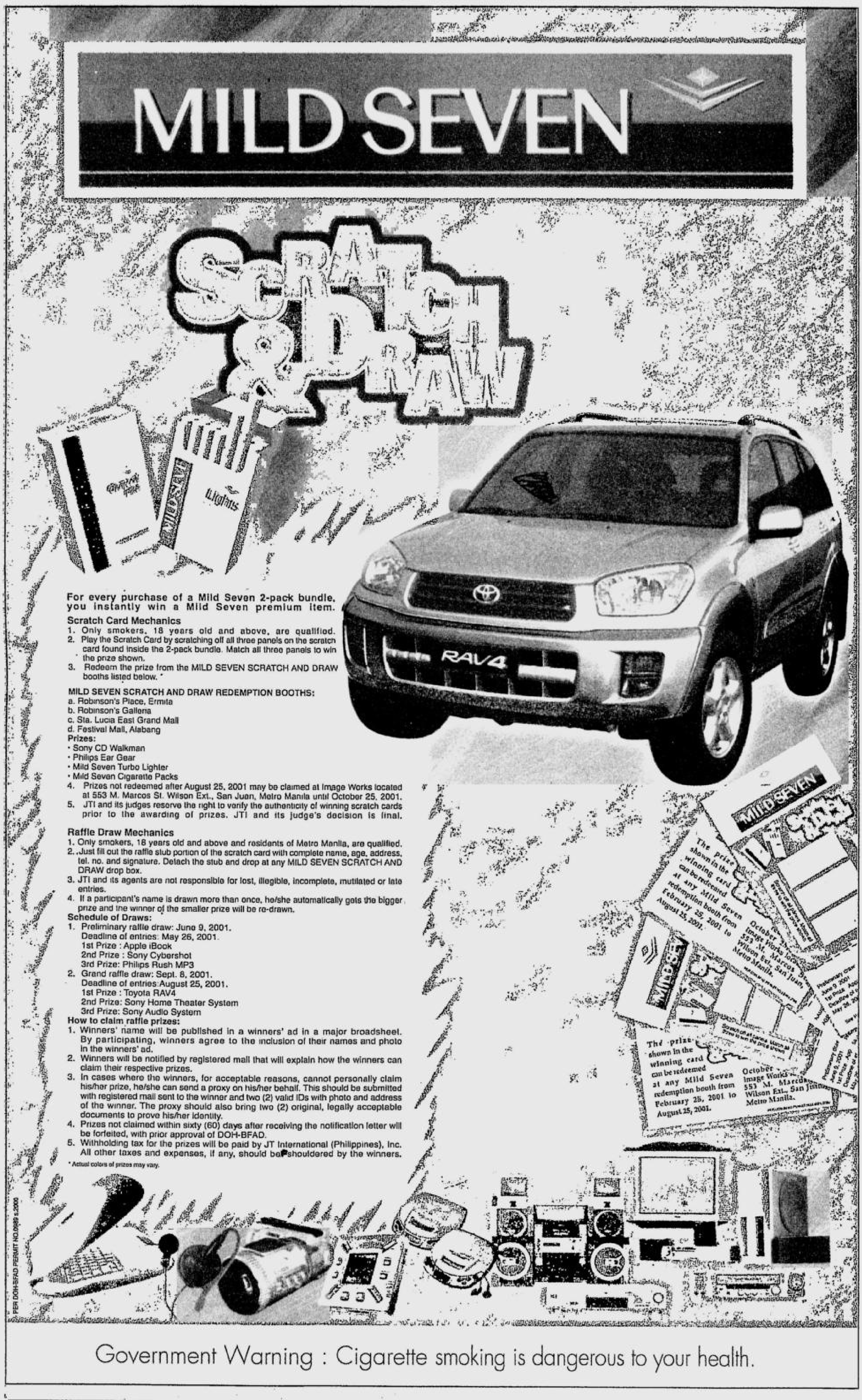
The national government has launched a massive vaccination program and slapped a three-week ban on transportation of animals considered threatened by foot-and-mouth disease.

The government has ruled to mass slaughter in affected regions after determining this measure would be too costly. Instead its strategy is to vaccinate in a ring around outbreak areas to try to prevent its spread.

Mario Raiteri, head of the farm associations confederation Coninagro, said the problem is that the government simply "does not have the money to compensate the owners of animals that would have to be culled. That is a state responsibility, but the country's economic situation does not allow for mass culls" with compensation for ranchers.

"If we vaccinate all the cattle, the situation will be taken care of," Raiteri said. "It is not necessary to kill all the animals, but we do have to start vaccinating . . . because if we don't, there is no stopping foot-and-mouth."

Some 28 million doses of vaccine have been distributed in several provinces, officials said. In four west-central departments in Santa Fe workers began Tuesday a mass vaccination of half a million dairy cows in a bid to try to keep them from infection. *AFP*



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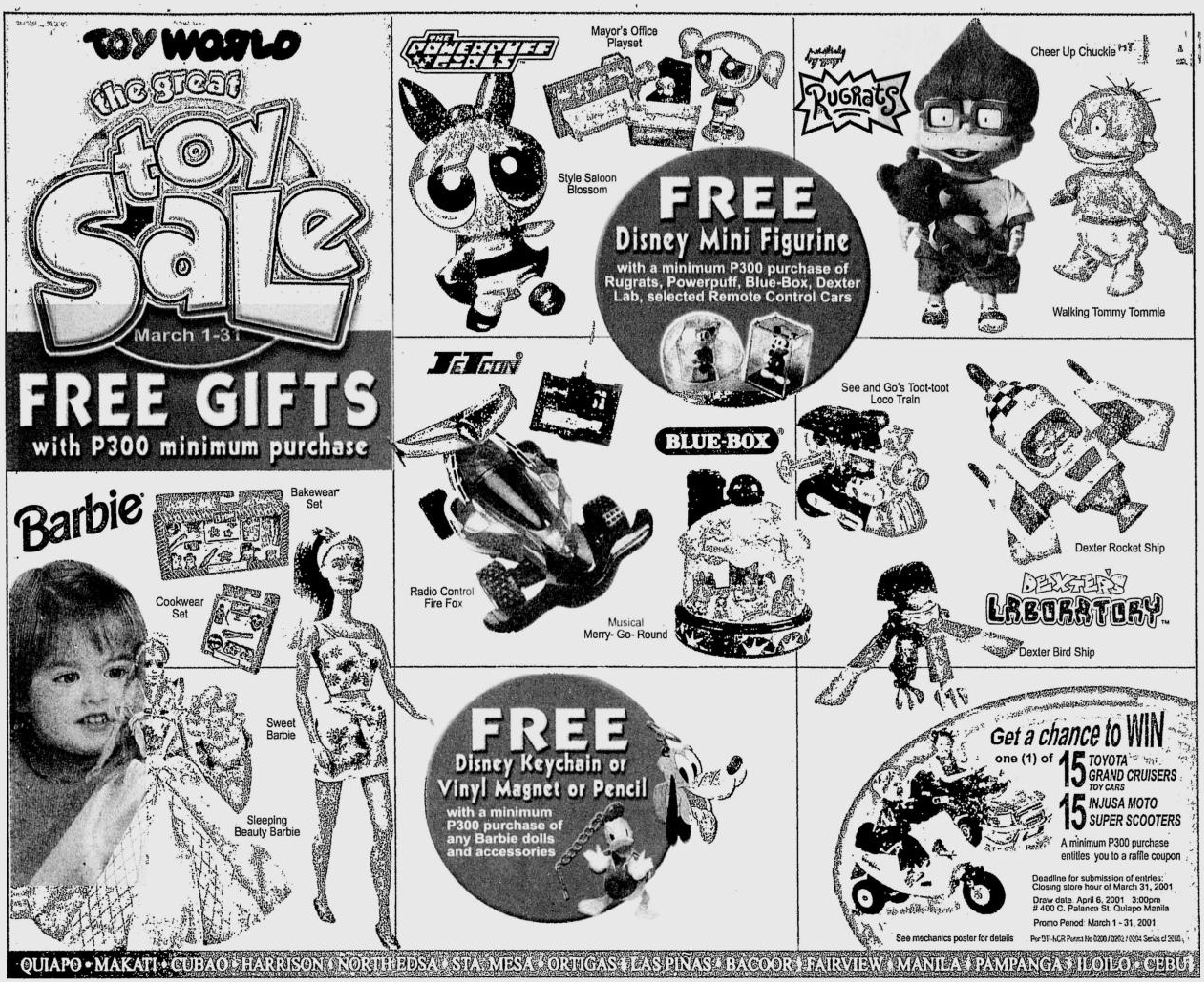
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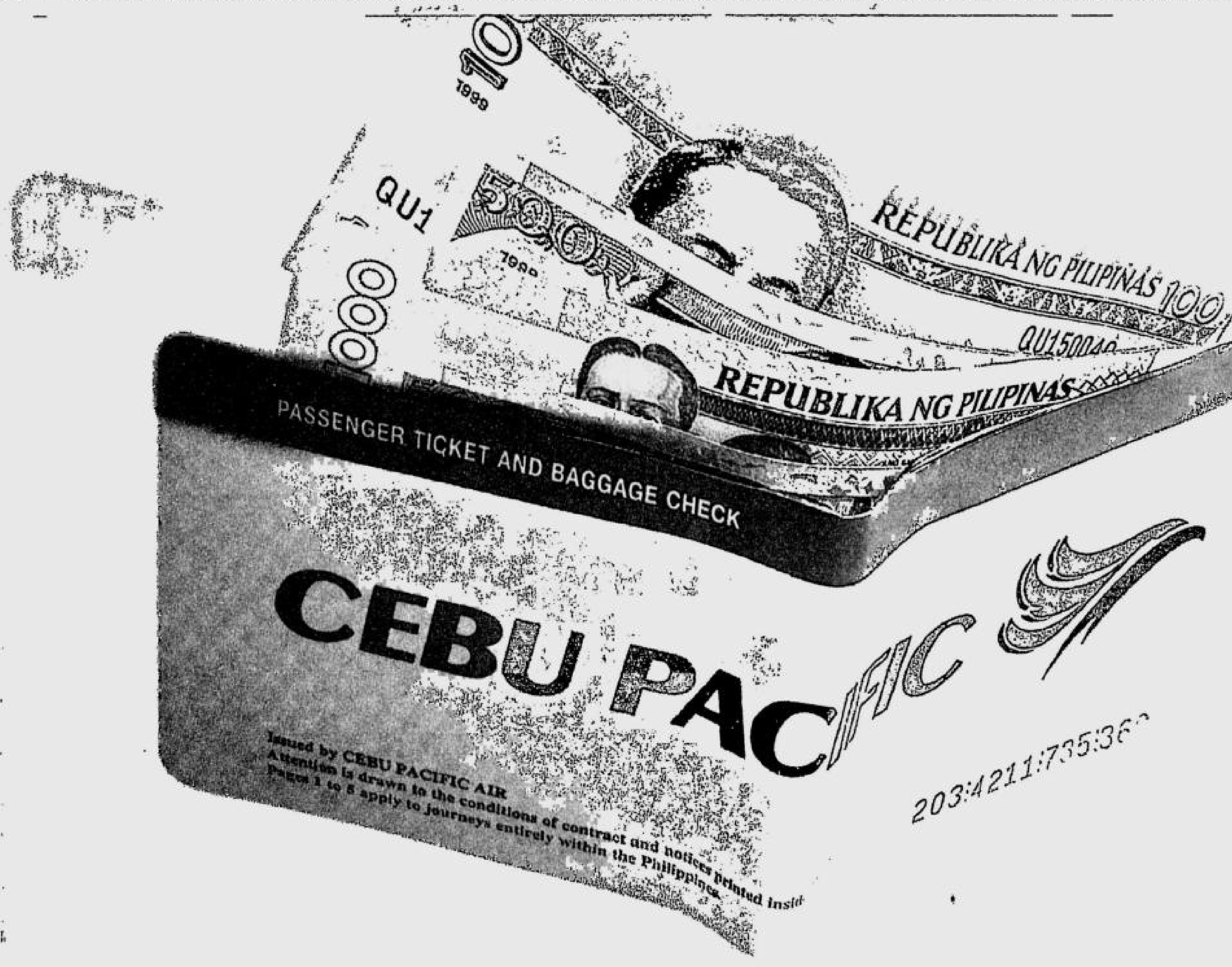
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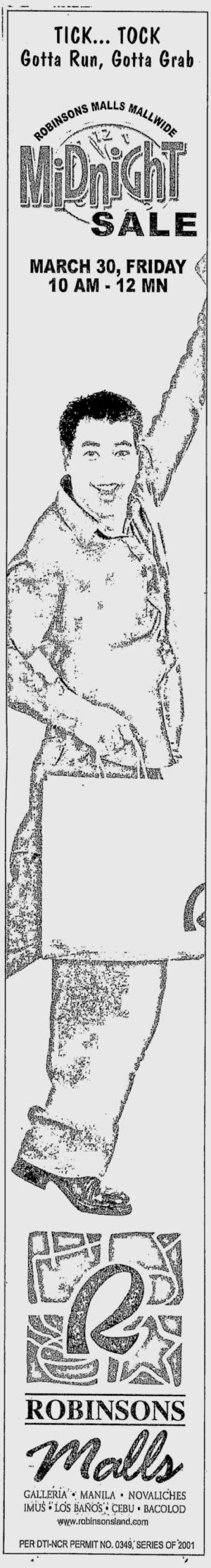


Wahid claims innocence in two scandals, rejects censure move

JAKARTA—Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid yesterday insisted he was innocent of involvement in two financial scandals and rejected the contents of a parliamentary censure motion.

"Allow me, with an apology, to say that I do not accept the contents of the memorandum (of censure) for constitutional reasons," Wahid said in his reply to the charges, read out to the house by a minister.

The censure motion was issued by the lower house, the People's Representative Council (DPR), in February over Wahid's alleged role in two scandals, opening the way for possible moves to impeach him.

The Bulogate and Bruneigate scandals involve a private donation of $2 million by the Sultan of Brunei which is unaccounted for and the embezzlement of $3.5 million from the state food agency Bulog by Wahid's former masseur.

"I am certain that in these cases, legally, I am not guilty," he said, without providing details.

"If I had wanted to make a personal profit from the funds related to these cases, of course it would not have been difficult for me," Wahid said.

"I did not do it because, from the beginning, it never crossed my mind to use the funds for my own personal interests," he added.

In his brief introduction to the reply, the clinically blind Wahid who is fighting for his political life, said: "This reply, because I cannot see, will be read out by Baharudin Lopa, the minister for justice and human rights."

Wahid accepted the memorandum "as a political reality which cannot be avoided," and said he agreed to respond despite what he saw as procedural violations in the formation of a special DPR committee whose finding became the basis for the memorandum.

"There was not sufficient reason to issue the memorandum. It should be based on facts that violations of the state guidelines took place," he said.

The special DPR probe committee, which he said had failed to fulfill many legal requirements and procedures, had concluded only that the president "could be suspected of having played a role" in the Bulogate scandal, and "had given inconsistent statements" in the Bruneigate case.

"I do not object to be investigated, to being given a memorandum or to being dismissed, or asked to resign from the presidency, as long as the constitutional criteria are really met," Wahid's reply said.

Security was tight in and around the parliament building.

A two-meter high interlocked plastic fence and rolls of razor wire were set up to prevent protesters from storming into the compound and hundreds of police, including mounted police and doghandlers, stood guard. *AFP*

WAHID delivering his speech at parliament March 28. REUTERS

3 killed in Palestinian suicide bombing

SDEH HEMED, Israel—A Palestinian suicide bomber yesterday detonated explosives near a group of Israeli teenagers waiting for a ride to school, killing himself and two others. Four people were hurt, one critically. In two other Israeli towns, bombs were discovered and safely exploded.

The Islamic militant group Hamas claimed responsibility for the deadly blast, and said seven more bombers were ready to strike.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called an emergency session of his security Cabinet yesterday afternoon. Sharon, elected on a promise to restore security to Israelis, is under growing pressure to respond harshly. However, Israel's police commissioner said little more could be done to prevent suicide attacks.

Yesterday's blast went of shortly after 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot of a gas station in northern Israel.

"I saw three young fellows lying on the ground. They looked in really bad shape," said a customer at the station, who was only identified by his first name, Maoz. "Another was wounded, but was still standing up."

White plastic bags covered the three bodies lying on the ground near the gas pumps. Troops sealed off the area, searching for additional explosives.

Also yesterday morning, two bombs were discovered and safely exploded in the open-air markets of the towns of Netanya and Petah Tikvah.

Earlier this month, four people, including a Palestinian suicide bomber, were killed in a blast in Netanya. On Tuesday, Palestinian militants carried out back-to-back attacks in Jerusalem, including a bombing near a bus that killed the assailant and injured more than two dozen bystanders.

Police suggested they could do little else to prevent bombings. "We are faced with a very big offensive of the terrorist organizations to carry out attacks," said police commissioner Shlomo Aharonishki. "The last few days show that in spite of all our stepped up efforts . . . they succeeded in getting in." *AP*

World's most populous nation counts its people at 1.26 billion

BEIJING—The population of China rose to 1.265 billion people by the end of 2000, an increase of 11.6 percent from 1990, according to the results of a census published yesterday.

The population increased by 132.15 million people since the last census in 1990, Zhu Zhixin, director general of the National Bureau of Statistics, told a news conference.

Zhu said the country's population control policy is working as the population growth rate has been reduced to 1.07 percent annually for the past 10 years—0.4 percent lower than the rate at the end of the 1980s.

The ratio of boys to girls at birth stood at 117 to 100, a significant increase from the previously reported figure of 113 to 100.

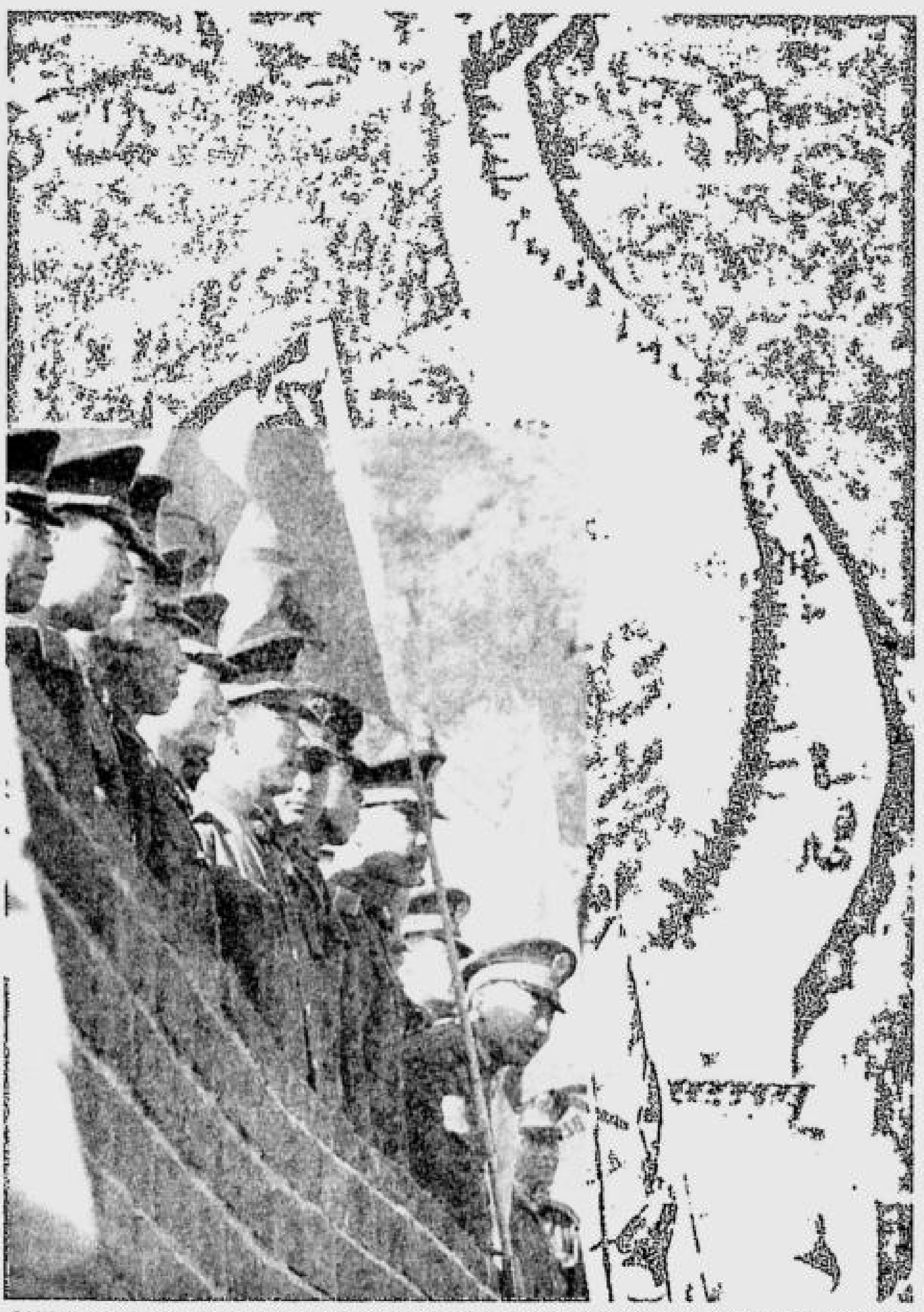
The government had admitted that the unusually high ratio of new born boys to girls is due to the traditional preference for boys and China's one-child policy.

The policy restricts couples to having one child unless they are peasants and their first child is a girl—and has resulted in selected abortions of female fetuses and infanticide of female babies, the government said.

The international norm for the ratio of newborn boys to girls is 106 to 100.

Sociologists and others have warned of the consequences of having an imbalance in gender ratios, such as Chinese men having difficulty in finding wives.

More emphasis is being placed on education to change the mindset of couples still entrenched in the traditional thinking that they must have a son—or several—to carry on their family lineage and ensure they will be taken care of in old age. *AFP*


CHINESE soldiers attend the "Great Wall climb" near Beijing to show their support for the Chinese capital's 2008 Olympic bid, March 28. Ten thousand Chinese students and soldiers climbed the Great Wall during the second mass event staged by Beijing to impress the International Olympic Committee. REUTERS

Chirac scorns summons over illegal funds

PARIS—French President Jacques Chirac yesterday refused to answer a summons to testify over allegations that his party received illegal funds in return for lucrative Paris building contracts, officials said.

Le Parisien newspaper quoted a judicial source as saying the investigating judge in the case, Eric Halphen, had "sent a court summons by regular post to the Elysee Palace at the end of last week."

"Judge Halphen proposed a date and time for a meeting at his office. He hopes to hear the former mayor of Paris and former RPR president's account of the public housing dossier as well as the posthumous confession of Jean-Claude Mery," the paper said.

A statement from the Elysee confirmed Chirac had received the summons, but said he would not respond to the court order.

"If he held information likely to clarify this case, the president of the Republic would not have failed to make it available," the statement said.

"He has already commented on this publicly on several occasions and does not have any other information which he did not already give to the French people.

Taking into account constitutional requirements, he cannot submit to such a summons, which goes against the principle of the separation of institutions and the necessity to maintain the continuity of the state," it added. *AFP*

Asean may put up crime center

BANGKOK—Police chiefs from 10 Southeast Asian countries began talks yesterday on setting up a regional center to help fight transnational crime, officials said.

The center would share policies and exchange information among law enforcers in member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, said a press release issued by the Thai police.

Purachai Piemsomboon, the Thai interior minister, said human trafficking, money laundering, Internet crime and drug trafficking were growing problems for Asean nations.

Fifty-five delegates, including police chiefs, state attorneys and senior interior ministry officials, are attending the three-day meeting on transnational crime in Bangkok.

Asean comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Purachai expressed hope that they could agree in principle on setting up the center in the days ahead. It was not yet clear where it might be located.

He stressed that it could help tackle the drug trade—a preoccupation of Thailand which regard the traffic in methamphetamines produced by ethnic armies in neighboring Burma, also known as Myanmar, as its worst national security threat.

"Thailand has declared war on drugs and hopes to get support from neighbors because we alone cannot deal with trafficking rings which are operating across borders," Purachai said.

Thai officials declined to comment on whether there would be bilateral discussions with delegates from Burma on the drug issue. Relations are currently strained because of it. *AP*

Recent US immigrants have harder time, study reveals

WASHINGTON—US immigrants who arrived in the 1980s remained poorer, were less likely to own homes and less apt to become citizens than those who came in the previous three decades, according to a study by a group calling for tougher immigration controls.

A key reason for the difference is that education levels of arriving immigrants have not kept pace with those of native-born Americans, the group said.

"In an economy that increasingly rewards educated workers . . . it is no surprise that many immigrants are finding it increasingly difficult to join the economic mainstream," said the study released yesterday by the Washington-based Center for Immigration Studies.

Steven Camarota, the center's research director, said the data show immigration policies should be changed to reduce entry of unskilled immigrants, eliminate preferences for spouses and children of non-citizens, stem employment of illegal immigrants, and help immigrants obtain job skills and become citizens more quickly.

But Frank Sharry, National Immigration Forum executive director, said it's unfair to compare today's immigrants to those of the 1950s and 1960s, when the United States had a "racialized" policy favoring Europeans who generally had more educational opportunities in their native countries. He said today's immigrants—mainly from Mexico, Central America and Asia—are comparable to those who arrived in the early 1900s.

"If America does the right things to help today's low-income new arrivals, they will also be tomorrow's firmly established middle class," Sharry said.

Camarota's study looked at four decades of Census data to track the progress immigrants made after living in the country 11 to 20 years. The progress of 1950s arrivals was reflected in 1970 data, 1960s arrivals in data from 1980 and so on.

"Since 1970, each immigration group has done worse than the other," Camarota said.

The findings don't bode well for 1990s immigrants, he said. *AP*

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

ROUNDUP

Wrong caption

OUR apologies for the wrong caption for the photo of candidate Pablo Villaber, a convicted swindler who is running for congressman of Davao del Sur under the ruling party Lakas-NUCD. The caption that came out on p. A-14 of the INQUIRER on March 28, 2001 said Villaber was coming out of a court that released him of liabilities in a swindling case. Villaber was released temporarily from NBI custody and the judge handling his case, Judge Hilario Mapayo, has not ruled on Villaber's claim that he was no longer liable for estafa and that his arrest last March 22 was illegal. He was released from NBI custody after he filed a petition for *habeas corpus*. Again, our deepest apologies.

Suspected killer slain

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police gunned down on Saturday a man who was suspected of killing a farmer in Calatagan, Batangas. Southern Tagalog regional police director Chief Supt. Domingo Reyes Jr. identified the slain suspect as Leovino Bayaborda, 41, single, fishpond owner and a resident of Barangay Balibago, Calatagan. Bayaborda earlier allegedly shot dead a resident of the same village. Police were persuading Bayaborda to surrender but the suspect chose instead to shoot it out with the lawmen, Reyes said. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Amnesty to rebels

BACOLOD CITY—The National Amnesty Commission has approved the granting of amnesty to 264 rebel returnees in Negros Occidental. The returnees will receive their amnesty certificates and a total of P2.5 million in livelihood assistance in simple rites on March 28. Capt. Michael Samson, Armed Forces Public Affairs Unit chief in Negros Occidental, said each returnee will get P1,750 in cash assistance. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Firearms seized

BACOLOD CITY—Police seized 16 firearms from a gun repair shop here in a raid Thursday. The gun shop, EN Gun Repair Shop, has a license to operate but it was raided because it was reportedly involved in gunrunning, said Supt. Amado Marquez Jr., the city police director. Efren Ocalinas Billanes, the shop owner, denied engaging in the illegal gun trade. He said his shop only repairs licensed firearms of clients that are mostly policemen and security guards. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Wanted man surrenders

ROXAS CITY—A man wanted for killing his employer in Laguna surrendered to a barangay captain and a top police official of Capiz Monday. Raul Bereber, 26, of Barangay Bayuyan, President Roxas town in Capiz, give himself up to his village chief, Nelson Danulo, and Supt. Orlando Pestaño, Capiz police director. Bereber was wanted for the death on Oct. 3 last year of his employer, whom he called "Ate Aloy" Vergara of San Pablo, Laguna. Police records showed that Bereber stabbed dead his employer after she refused to lend him money. He fled to Capiz after the killing.

Gerry Pagharion, PDI Visayas Bureau

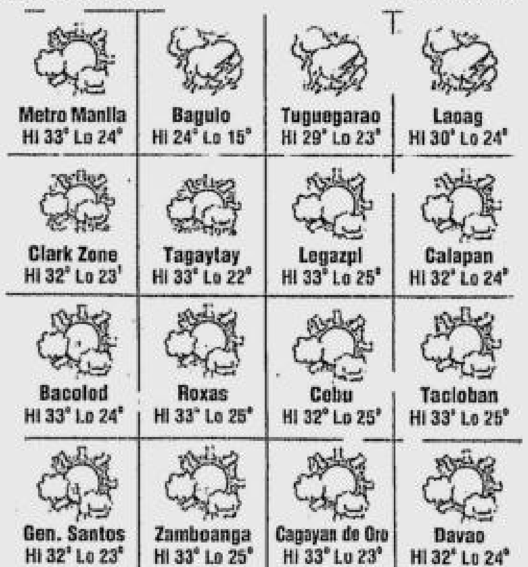
2 new Albay cities

LEGAZPI CITY—Albay gave birth on Saturday to two new cities, Ligao and Tabaco, after the "yes" votes won in simultaneous plebiscites in the two towns. Commission on Elections records showed that 92 percent of voters who turned up at the polling booths voted yes to make Ligao a city while 82 percent of voters in Tabaco voted yes for the town's cityhood. Albay province now has a city in each of its three districts: Ligao City in the third district, Legazpi City in the second district and Tabaco City in the first district. *Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Central Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the coutnry will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA



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Bacolod Hi 33° Lo 24°	Roxas Hi 33° Lo 25°	Cebu Hi 32° Lo 25°	Tacloban Hi 33° Lo 25°
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Gloria affirms plan to import more rice

STA. MARIA, Pangasinan—Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor said rice smuggling is hurting farmers most, but admitted that President Macapagal-Arroyo had reviewed and approved her predecessor's plan to import 450,000 metric tons more of rice.

Montemayor, who was speaker during the graduation ceremonies of the Pangasinan State University here last week, said the negative effect of rice smuggling on farmers was "dramatic."

"Every time smuggled rice is introduced, the price of local rice plummets. This hurts the farmers especially when the smuggled rice is introduced during harvest time when there is so much supply," he said.

Despite the increase in rice production in the past two years, the country is set to import 450,000 metric tons of rice this year. The supply is expected to last for 20 days.

"Before President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office, the Department of Agriculture has recommended the importation of that volume of rice. The President reviewed the recommendation and (found that) it was a valid need," he said.

He said there was need for a 30-day buffer stock so the 1995 rice crisis that hit the country would not be repeated.

"While the private sector had the rice stock, they jacked up the price so high so people lined up at the National Food Authority rice outlets, making it appear that there was a rice crisis. The truth was there was enough rice but the private dealers sold their supply at P20 a kilo compared to NFA's P13 a kilo," Montemayor said.

Another issue facing farmers is the planned privatization of the NFA, one of the requirements of the Asian Development Bank before it releases a $175-million loan that falls under the grains sector development program.

Of the amount, Montemayor said only $75 million will be used for the grains sector while the remaining $100 million will be used for debt servicing.

Calling the arrangement with ADB a "dangerous agreement," Montemayor said the DA would ask the ADB to forego the imposed conditions that he described as "detrimental to farmers."

He said one of the conditions for the release of the second tranche of the loan is to remove the restrictions on the importation of rice on any agency, without the need for a permit.

At present, the country can import rice only if there is lack of supply and the volume of importation would depend on the actual need.

The second tranche, which is $30 million, is set for release in May while the third will be released at the later part of 2002.

Montemayor, however, said he was not totally against the privatization of the NFA as long as "there are sure-fire guarantees that the interests of the farmers and consumers are protected."

One of these guarantees is that the NFA must not engage in business but only as a service agency that will rent out its facilities to farmers.

"Once a privatized NFA engages in business, you would create a monopoly that will really hurt the farmers," Montemayor said. *Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Agno wins fight over cement plant

BY YOLANDA FUERTES
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

AGNO, Pangasinan—The Taiwanese proponents of the proposed P13-billion cement plant project in Barangay Macaboboni here have lost the project even before they can lay the plant's foundations.

After two years of failing to comply with the conditions of its environmental compliance certificate (ECC), the proposed cement plant complex project is considered dead as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources would automatically revoke its ECC today.

Residents opposing the plant for the last four years called this development "a major victory," saying they have won the battle to protect their environment.

A condition of the ECC, issued by DENR on March 29, 1999, states that the project's ECC would be considered automatically revoked if the project fails to start within two years from the date of the ECC's issuance.

Section 27 of the ECC also says that the ECC would be revoked if the project operation is suspended or stopped for more than two years when significant changes in land and resource uses have occurred in the project area and its vicinities.

Lydia Colobong, president of the Agno Concerned Citizens for Sustainable Development (Access) that opposed the project, said the Taiwan-based Goldsun Corp. has not complied with any of the 55 conditions imposed by the ECC before the project can start.

She said they would hold a thanksgiving Mass next month to celebrate their victory.

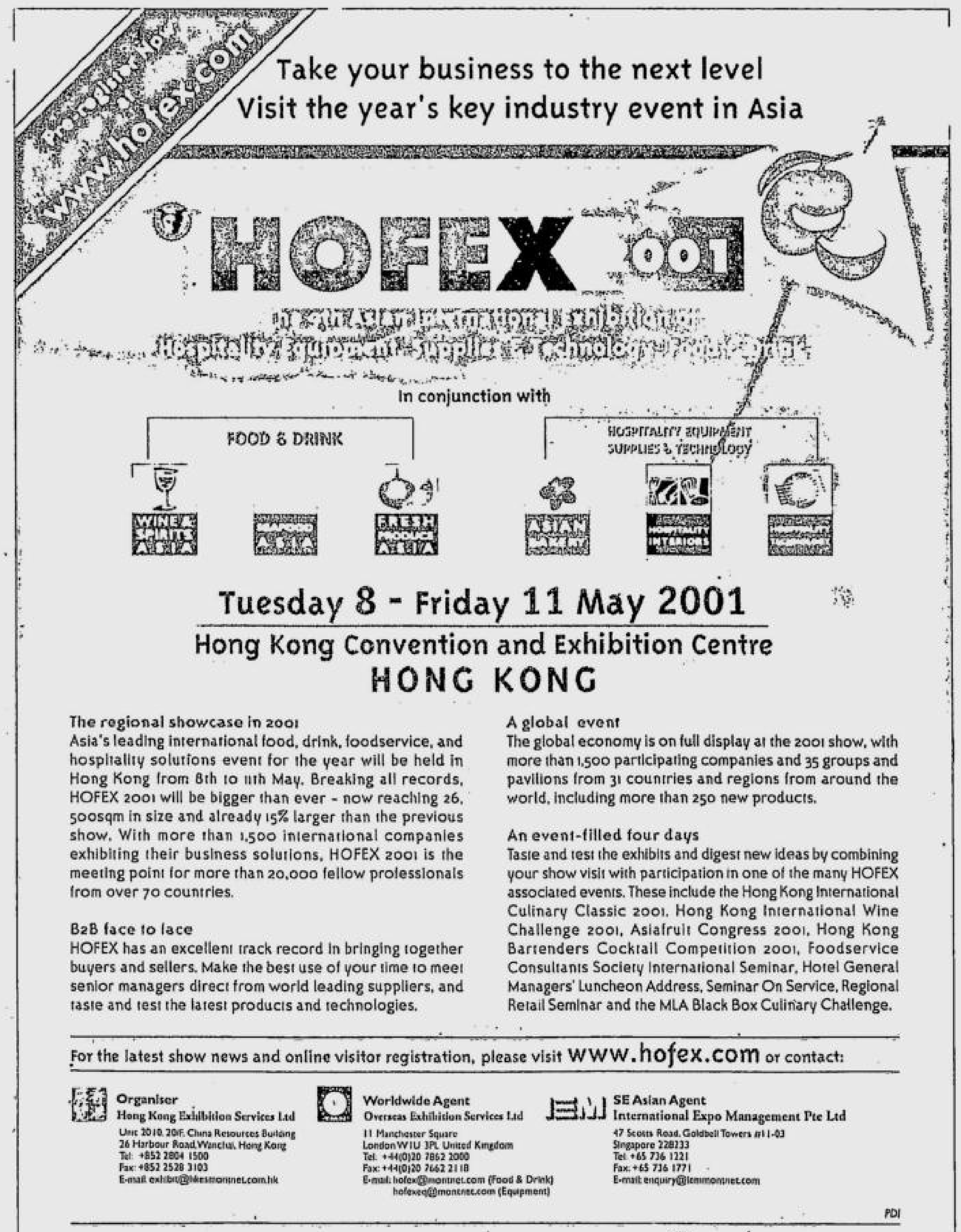
The Taiwanese firm intends to establish the cement plant in a limestone-rich area in Sitio Abagatanen facing the China Sea.

However, residents opposing the plant remain vigilant following reports that the proponents are asking for an extension of the ECC.

Colobong said Access, in a resolution, had asked DENR to implement Section 27 of the ECC at the end of March, thus automatically canceling the ECC.

"We strongly and continuously oppose the project due to unacceptable environment and health risks, serious land resource use conflict and problems of social acceptability," the resolution said.

Access and other environmentalist groups earlier submitted motions for reconsideration and withdrawal of the ECC to the DENR but former Environment Secretary Antonio Cerilles never answered their letters and petitions.



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Disease-causing organism found in Abra hospital's water supply

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The biggest hospital in Abra was ordered closed for three weeks starting Tuesday last week after a water-borne microorganism was detected in its water supply.

Dr. Maria Victoria Purugganan, provincial health officer, said the Abra Provincial Hospital (APH) has been closed since March 20 after an infection of *pseudomonas aeruginosa* (p. aeruginosa) was detected in at least two patients there.

P. aeruginosa is known as a pathogen that causes disease in people with impaired local or general defense mechanisms, such as the elderly or the very young, patients with burns or extensive wounds or those with the AIDS virus.

The microorganism was detected in two young burn victims in Abra who were confined at the APH in the first week of March.

The presence of p. aeruginosa was detected in Manila when the patients were transferred to the Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital.

Water used by vulnerable patients for drinking or bathing, if it contains a large amount of what doctors describe as opportunistic water-borne pathogens like p. aeruginosa, can produce various infections of the skin and the mucous membranes of the eye, ear, nose and throat.

The 103 patients earlier admitted at the APH were transferred to various district hospitals in the towns of Bucay, Villaviciosa, La Paz and Dolores, all in Abra.

Purugganan said the out-patient department of the APH will, however, remain open.

She said the closure of the hospital for three weeks will give its personnel enough time to do a general cleaning of its facilities to stop the spread of the pathogen.

She said the p. aeruginosa has a two-week ovulation period and that the hospital should be closed for three weeks.

According to the World Health Organization, containing the pathogen requires sanitizing the water sources of areas where the pathogen was found to be spreading.

Purugganan has already made the rounds of radio stations in Abra asking the people of the province not to panic over the reports.

SWAT to guard vs poll fraud

CAMP ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan—Regional police officials have asked 56 newly trained members of the Special Weapon and Tactics (SWAT) team of the Bulacan police command to be the main force against election irregularities in the province, following Bulacan's classification as an election hot spot.

Chief Supt. Enrique Galang, Central Luzon police director, said compared to Pampanga and Nueva Ecija, which are also classified as hot spots, Bulacan has all the elements of an election area of concern as determined by the police and the Commission on Elections.

Galang said a province or a town is classified as a hot spot if:

- It is affected by insurgency.
- Violence had occurred there during the last elections
- Intense political rivalry is present in the town or province that may result in election-related violence.
- This year's election period is marred by election-related violent incidents.

The 56 members of the Bulacan-SWAT unit on Monday graduated from their training course in this camp under Chief Insp. Roderick Minong, Obando police director.

Galang gave the unit's poll assignment during his speech at the graduation rites for the trainees at the camp. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

CAMPAIGN TRAIL

RUFINO GONZALES III

ILOILO NATIVE
Reelectionist Sen. Franklin Drilon works out the crowd during a rally of the People Power Coalition at the Jaro District Plaza in Iloilo City last Sunday.

Ping warns of 'illusory peace' with MILF

FORMER PNP chief Panfilo Lacson has urged the government not to return to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front its camps that were seized by the military in a major offensive last year.

In a statement, Lacson, now a senatorial candidate of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), warned that giving back the MILF camps would achieve nothing but "an illusory peace."

Lacson's call came in the wake of reports that the government has already forged a secret meeting with the MILF in Kuala Lumpur over the weekend which precedes the holding of formal peace negotiations between the government and the rebel group.

One of the demands allegedly signed in the agreement is the return of rebel camps captured by the military.

The former PNP chief also urged Malacañang to make total disarmament of MILF forces one of the government's demands in its peace negotiations, saying there can be no real peace in Mindanao when forces other than the military are allowed to carry weapons of war.

"Total disarmament and keeping Camp Abubakar in government hands will ensure true peace in Mindanao. Anything less would only be an illusory peace and pyretic victory similar to what was achieved during the Ramos administration when the rebels grew in strength because of too much government forbearance to the fortification of MILF strongholds," Lacson said.

"*Pogi* points for propaganda purposes will not ensure peace. Only strong political will and decisive action will bring lasting peace in the South," added Lacson, whose position was echoed by majority of Mindanaoans who came in droves to meet him during his visit in Kidapawan City.

Lacson said disarmament and the government's keeping of Abubakar is as important as the government position against secession. Lacson said the cause of conflict in Mindanao has always been poverty.

He expressed confidence that the rebels would accept peace if they can be assured that there would be an equitable allocation of resources for the full development of Mindanao.

He said Mindanaoans know that this is the only way that a just and lasting peace can be achieved in Mindanao, "and only when peace is achieved can Mindanao fully realize its potential as a center for economic growth of the country," Lacson said.

For as long as there is an organized armed group in Mindanao than the military, "hostilities will continue to stare us in the face and peace can never be achieved," Lacson added. "The Visayas and Luzon must not take Mindanao lightly for our economy hinges on Mindanao's development as the country's food basket and as seat of our major export industries," he said.

Pols fight over credit for roads in Quezon

LUCENA CITY—Political rivals in the second district of Quezon are entangled in a tug-of-credit for P52.2 million worth of farm-to-market roads designed to attract voters in the May 14 elections.

Lawyer Eduardo Escueta, former Philippine Coconut Authority administrator and now Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino congressional candidate for the district, has complained that incumbent Rep. Marcial Punzalan Jr. was grabbing the credit for the projects. Escueta said he was "the one who requested for the projects."

"The Department of Agriculture approved it due to my effort. Then why is it that Congressman Punzalan now wants to grab the credit? For the political stock of his wife who is running on his behalf? It's very obvious," Escueta told the INQUIRER.

Lucena City Mayor Ramon Talaga Jr. said his city was supposed to be the recipient of at least P13 million worth of roads in the coastal villages of Talao-Talao and Dalahican.

"But since Congressman Punzalan is blocking efforts at the DPWH to stop the implementation of the projects . . . the said program (is) now in danger of being shelved," he claimed.

But according to Punzalan, he, not Escueta, initiated the projects.

"How can he say straight from his face that he was the one who worked for the release of the project? Yes, they have long since worked for the release of the funds intended for farm-to-market roads even during the time of ousted President Estrada. But they never succeeded," Punzalan told the INQUIRER.

He said he was the one who persuaded the Department of Budget and Management to release the funds for the projects. "But since I was also the vice chair of the House committee on appropriation, I supported the call for a review of the projects" because of the budget deficit, said Punzalan.

"That is not blocking. That is sound financial management," said Punzalan. ***Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Blast rocks bet's house in Isabela

ILAGAN, Isabela—Unidentified men exploded a pillbox inside the compound of Ilagan Mayor Mercedes Uy in Barangay San Vicente here Monday, but hurt no one, police said.

Uy said the bombing was a "political threat" from the rivals of her daughter, Margarette Uy, who is running for mayor of this town under the Lakas-NUCD.

The younger Uy was with her mother in their house when the pillbox exploded.

Police investigators said they suspected that only a firecracker, and not a bomb, exploded since there were no traces of explosive materials.

"This is probably done by other parties (Uy daughter's opponents) to destabilize her," the mayor told the INQUIRER.

But the younger Uy's political rival, Dr. Jesus Cruz, said the pillbox throwing was a ploy allegedly hatched by the Uys to destroy the credibility of their rivals in the May 14 elections.

"If (Sen. Juan Ponce) Enrile was alleged then to have himself ambushed, they (Uys) can do it, too," Cruz said by telephone.

He was referring to the staged ambush of former Defense Secretary Enrile shortly before the declaration of martial law by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1972.

Cruz, Aksyon Demokratiko mayoral candidate, said his rivals would devise ways to destroy his credibility through malicious activities and fabricated attacks. ***Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Bohol bets for gov throw 'houses' at each other

By Chito Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—The campaign period for local candidates has yet to officially start on March 30 but the two candidates for governor of Bohol province have already started what has become known here as a "house-to-house" campaign.

Reelectionist Gov. Rene Relampagos and his opponent, Bohol Rep. Erico Aumentado, are accusing each other of owning mansions.

Relampagos, of the PDP-Laban, dared his detractors to prove allegations that he owns two mansions in Baclayon and in Manila.

"If they can prove that I own any mansion, I will personally turn over the key of that mansion to them," he dared.

He then dared Aumentado, of the Lakas-NUCD-Abag-Promdi, to do the same if he could prove that the congressman owned houses outside Bohol.

Relampagos said they were verifying reports that Aumentado owned a house in Dallas, Texas.

Aumentado vehemently denied the accusation, saying: "If Relampagos can prove that I have houses other than my residence in Tagbilaran and the farmhouse in Ubay, I'm willing to donate these to him."

He said his farmhouse in Calanggaman, Ubay, cost him only P450,000. It is a three-bedroom house with a single area for the living room, dining room and kitchen.

During session days in Congress, Aumentado said he stayed in his daughter's apartment on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.

The 84.5-square-meter apartment was acquired by his daughter, Rizalea Aumentado-Dolores, through a housing loan from the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. using her employment contract in the United States as a guarantee.

Aumentado accused Relampagos of being so fond of mansions and grandiose structures like the Baclayon mansion by the sea.

Six lawyers sued Relampagos before the Solicitor General's Office, claiming that the governor illegally acquired the Baclayon property.

The governor's eldest sister, Emma Relampagos-Caseñas, said she owned the house and vowed to exhaust all means to run after the complainants.

Caseñas said she decided to come out because of the insult heaped not only on her brother but on her family "whom the complainants have degraded and insulted in the course of their demolition job" against Relampagos.

She insisted that they had documents to prove that they owned the house.

The atmosphere, however, is heating up with the campaign period just around the bend. Who knows where the campaign will shift to next? Definitely, however, Boholanos have not heard the last about houses and mansions.

Comelec confirms 'flying voter' phenomenon

By Romy Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Rogelio Benjamin, Commission on Elections provincial supervisor, has confirmed reports that many residents registered at least twice in the province.

Benjamin said they confirmed that at least 10 residents from Mabinay town also registered in the adjacent Bais City.

The number of double registrants, he added, could be more because his office started investigating the practice only on March 27.

Benjamin said the process was slow because it was manual.

But, he said, Lakas-NUCD candidates in Bais City, some 45 kilometers north of here, claimed to have discovered more than a thousand double registrants there.

The group hired the services of a computer programmer to track down double registrants in Bais, he added.

Benjamin said the 10 double registrants are residents and registered voters of Barangays Linodhan, Caluy-ahan, Campanun-an and Pantao in Mabinay.

But, he added, they were also found to have registered in Barangay Cambagahan, Bais City. The Comelec was still tracking the dates of their registration in Mabinay and in Bais.

Benjamin said he had been suspecting that there was massive double registration in some municipalities due to an "alarming" increase in the number of new registered voters.

The increase in some areas surpassed the projected six to nine percent increase in the number of registered voters.

Benjamin said Basay town had a 25 percent increase in the number of registered voters; Bindoy town, 21 percent; Tayasan town, 20 percent; Bais, 18 percent; and Zamboanguita and Dauin towns, 16 percent each.

The Comelec also noted a 14 percent increase in the number of registered voters in Manjuyod town and 13 percent each in Ayugon and Bacong towns. A 12 percent increase in the number of registered voters was also noted in Valencia town.

Benjamin vowed to prosecute people who registered more than once. Double registration is a crime punishable by one to six years in prison.

DOJ chief taps Chavez to track Marcos wealth

(From page A1)

phon off money from Switzerland to Germany."

Perez also said that "settlement" with the Marcoses was not in his mind, as full recovery of their illegal assets abroad was the focus of the new government.

He said he had the "confidence" of the President in the matter.

"That is what is important here," he emphasized.

Perez said that Chavez would assist the DOJ on the recovery of Marcos assets on a pro bono basis.

He said that the DOJ was also reviewing the position of Australian investigator Reiner Jacobi who has been pushing the government since 1998 to recover the alleged Araneta bank assets at the Union Bank of Switzerland.

Perez said the DOJ was now studying Jacobi's work for the government since 1988, and might reconsider employing his help in pursuing the fabled wealth.

"It's possible. We will study it. It all depends on the terms," Perez said, referring to the possibility of taking Jacobi on as an official government consultant.

"I have an open mind on this. It's important to have an open mind at this point," he added.

Jacobi cleared of forgery

His remarks came two weeks after the DOJ cleared Jacobi of a forgery case earlier filed by the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

The DOJ ruled on March 6 that there was no basis for a case against Jacobi for forgery, reversing an earlier resolution dated June 25, 1999.

Perez yesterday issued a statement on the plan to deputize Chavez, the government's chief lawyer under the Aquino administration. Chavez filed the government's main forfeiture case against the Marcoses in December 1991.

"I've already met with former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez and he has considered accepting (the offer) to assist us in the Marcos cases," he said in the statement.

"He will assist us on all matters. I've organized a team to look over the evidence on hand with the PCGG," he said.

Perez said Chavez showed him documents allegedly signed by Irene in Deutsche Bank on Feb. 14—the same documents cited by the INQUIRER in its special report on the alleged money-laundering attempt.

"They were very impressive," Perez said of the apparent evidence.

Perez and two DOJ undersecretaries—Manuel Teehankee and Jose Calida—met with Chavez for almost two hours on Tuesday afternoon.

The DOJ officials brought samples of the signatures of Irene and compared them to the documents she had supposedly signed at Deutsche Bank.

Permission

As of last night, Philippine Embassy officials in Germany had failed to get evidence from German authorities investigating Irene for money laundering.

Perez said the German prosecutors were prepared to give the documents to the Philippine envoys but wanted permission first from the Minister of Justice in Germany.

"And so I've instructed Undersecretary Manuel Teehankee to prepare the correspondence to the Minister of Justice in Germany so that we could obtain the documents," Perez said.

But the PCGG said that it expected German investigators to release the findings of their probe into the questionable bank transactions "within the week."

PCGG officer in charge Jorge Sarmiento said that recent pronouncements of Johannes Mocken, spokesperson of the public prosecutor's office in Dusseldorf, indicated that the investigation of German authorities was "either finished or almost finished."

"I hope we can get a copy of the investigative report soon, so we can study it and also submit it to the Senate blue ribbon committee," Sarmiento told the INQUIRER in an interview yesterday.

Relying on Germans

The PCGG team, tasked to look into allegations of the existence and movement of at least $13.2 billion worth of Swiss bank assets, has been meeting regularly, Sarmiento said.

The group is in charge of the Philippine investigation of the Irene account in Switzerland.

It is composed of Sarmiento, PCGG director for research Danilo Daniel, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez and Undersecretary Emmanuel Teehankee, Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo and another assistant solicitor general who is yet to be named.

He said the team would go to Switzerland and Germany in the second quarter of this year to help in the investigations there.

Sarmiento said his team and that of Zurich District Attorney Dieter Jann, who is handling the Swiss inquiry, were waiting for the German authorities to release their findings.

He stressed that it was the Germans who would have firsthand information and credible evidence that could indict or clear the Marcos heiress of money-laundering charges.

He said it would also be up to the Senate blue ribbon committee to decide whether to call the Araneta couple to testify at a committee inquiry.

"Everything would depend on the results of the German investigation," said Sarmiento, the lone PCGG official left under the Macapagal administration.

PDI columnist . . .

(From page A1)

accepted the position after a talk with the President. The official announcement is expected to be made in the next few days.

Tiglao, an INQUIRER columnist, is the senior vice president and editor in chief of the news website Inq7.net, a joint venture of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and GMA Network. He earlier served as the Manila bureau chief of the Far Eastern Economic Review and a business editor of the Manila Chronicle.

Tiglao was a Nieman fellow at Harvard University from 1988-1989 and a Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) awardee for print journalism in 1991. He is one of the founders of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

Conductor Romero dies . . .

(From page A1)

Philharmonic, died yesterday at the Makati Medical Center of lung cancer. He was 71.

He is survived by his children Sofia Romero-Schwartz and Carlo, son-in-law Dan Schwartz and grandchildren Ili, 10, and Amalya, 5.

His last conducting stint was with the Beijing Symphony Orchestra and Xiamen Symphony in China with pianist Ingrid Sala Santamaria as soloist in Schuman's Piano Concerto in A minor.

His last two remaining scheduled engagements were with the Peace Philharmonic Orchestra in Cebu which he canceled and Tuesday night's closing concert of the National Philharmonic Society featuring Romanian violinist Alexander Tomescu.

Romero's daughter Sofia announced her father's indisposition and the cancellation of what would have been his last conducting engagement.

"My father would like to reassure you that even if he couldn't make it tonight, you won't go home disappointed after this concert," Romero's daughter told the audience at the Meralco Theater audience before the start of the concert.

The audience was not disappointed. Conductor Hermenigildo Ranera took over Romero's place and conducted the National Philharmonic Orchestra. The Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky concertos ended with a standing ovation for Romanian violin superstar Alexander Tomescu.

Tomescu canceled his flight to South Korea yesterday to condole with Romero's family.

Last stint

Romero's last conducting stint in Manila was with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra with Russian violinist Anastasia Chebotareva as soloist in the Paganini and Beethoven concertos.

Romero composed several orchestral works, the most frequently performed of which is "Philippine Portrait," last played by the Peace Philharmonic in Cebu last month.

He wrote an autobiographical book, "An American Affair," where he chronicled his ordeal with American immigration agents.

He founded the National Philharmonic Orchestra in 1961 and directed it for 40 years. It accompanied some of the world's greatest soloists, among them, Leonid Kogan, Philippe Entremont, Gary Graffman, Gidon Kremer, Janos Starker, Vladimir Spivakov, Susan Starr, Nelly Miricioiu, Stephanie Chase and Paul Badura Skoda.

Romero established a solid reputation as a conductor in his performances with some of the leading orchestras of the world. In Prague he was given nine curtain calls by an enthusiastic audience.

Some reviews

Tass News Agency (Moscow): "His high performance attracted audiences by the depth and logic of his interpretation, simplicity, expressive manner and emotional touch."

APN News Agency (Moscow): "He has a deep sense of music, a fine feeling of style and a strong conductor's will."

New York Post: "An excellent conductor. His reading was dramatic, well-paced, and shaped with tender, loving care."

San Francisco Chronicle: "Romero produced solidly virtuoso playing and fine ensemble..."

New York Daily News: "Romero is a thoroughly competent leader with a clear beat and a no-nonsense interpretative style..."

Honolulu Star Bulletin: "From the opening notes it was clear that Romero was a musical craftsman of no mean ability."

Romero's last stint as impresario was at the Philippine debut of the Moscow City Ballet in 1998 and its second Philippine performance in the year 2000.

He also produced several recordings in cooperation with some well-known orchestras like the London Philharmonic, the Warsaw Philharmonic and the Moscow Symphony.

'Fighter'

National Artist for Music Lucrecia Kasilag described Romero as a "fighter" and said he "was always for the Filipino."

He was the publisher of several books on Philippine music, including "Great Philippine Classics for Violin and Piano" and "50 Immortal Filipino Duets."

Romero studied music at the UP Conservatory of Music and debuted as a young conductor in Guam. He later became concertmaster of the Honolulu Symphony.

He proceeded to California and took postgraduate courses at the San Francisco Conservatory. At the Music Academy of the West in Sta. Barbara, California, he met the violin idol of his youth, Jascha Heifetz, whom he had heard in Manila in 1931.

Romero was cited by Asia Magazine as one of the 24 Most Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines in 1963. He received a Tawid Award from the Ilocano Heritage Foundation and a Century Award from Laoag City in 1985.

His contemporaries include Sergio Esmilia Jr., Oscar Yatco, Gilopez Kabayao and National Artist for Music Andrea Veneracion.

Romero's body now lies at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park. He will be buried on Saturday, March 31, at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

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Soldiers dig up 8 NPA mass graves

(From page A1)

Arroyo approved a Scandinavian venue for the resumption of formal peace negotiations with the communist-led National Democratic Front on April 27.

Maj. Johnny Macanas, spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said the military had previously unearthed the skeletal remains of about 500 people from similar shallow graves in Mindanao.

In March last year, the military recovered the skeletal remains of 110 people in Barangay Taglimao, some 30 kilometers from the quarry in Sitio Tawili.

Macanas said the killings were part of "Kampanyang Ahos," a campaign by the NPA to rid its ranks of suspected government spies and informers.

Innocent victims

"Many of the victims were innocent. Our agents had already left before the communists started the killings," he said.

Macanas said he had asked the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct a medico-legal examination of the skeletons to determine their identities.

He added the Commission on Human Rights had also promised to conduct a separate inquiry into the killings.

It took the CHR team, accompanied by soldiers and newsmen, two hours to reach the old quarry in the hinterlands of Northern Mindanao.

Dalmacio Duenas, head of the nearby village of Nangkaon, said villagers would occasionally stumble upon skeletons in the area.

Duenas reckoned the bodies of about 100 victims still lay buried at the site.

Bitaugan said he and other villagers left Sitio Tawili after the killings and fled to the nearby town of Manticao. They began returning in 1988.

"When I came back, I would sometimes go back to the quarry and light a candle for the victims," Bitaugan said.

Yesterday morning, about 50 relatives of those who were killed placed the skeletal remains in two big wooden coffins and marched around Cagayan de Oro and Opol town to denounce the NPA atrocities.

They later brought the coffins to the parish church in Opol where a priest blessed the remains before they were buried at the public cemetery.

Macanas said the military had filed murder charges against Jose Ma. Sison, CPP founding chair, and Ma. Luisa Purcray, a local NPA leader.

Similar bloody purges were carried out in Leyte in 1978-79, in Southern Tagalog in 1980-81, and in Southern Luzon and Metro Manila in 1989.

According to CPP documents, the revolutionary forces lost about a thousand cadres in the purges. Nearly all the victims were later found to be innocent. They were hailed as "revolutionary martyrs."

Sison, who was in prison during the purge, had described the killings as "revolting" and "senseless."

The communist leader, who is now based in the Netherlands, had also denounced as "a grave violation of civil rights the unjust taking of lives of comrades (resulting in) the attendant devastation of the revolutionary forces."

Several CPP cadres were held accountable for the killings and expelled, resulting in a serious split in the party.

The military estimated that 4,000 to 6,000 people were killed in the purges. *With reports from AP and AFP*

Almonte: Letter shows Dacer feared Estrada

(From page A1)

"I will be in touch. Please take care of my two daughters and please, please look into the welfare of my two daughters in Sun Valley—Ampy and Sabina," the letter read.

Almonte disclosed the contents of the letter and distributed copies at a news forum yesterday in Pasig City.

Upon receiving the letter, Almonte said, he told Dacer to "be careful."

"I cannot confirm the contents of the letter, but the information itself is urgent (enough) that even without any corroborating information, we have to take action so that your life would be safe," he claimed he told the PR man.

On Nov. 24, over two weeks after his return, Dacer was abducted by suspected members of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, then concurrently headed by Lacson.

'Natural Goebbels'

Estrada could not be reached for comment. His spokesperson Ramon Cardenas, contacted by the INQUIRER at the Estrada residence on Polk Street in San Juan, said the former President had left around 3 p.m. for a campaign sortie in Albay.

But one-time rivals for the country's top police post, senatorial candidate Lacson and National Bureau of Investigation director Reynaldo Wycoco appeared geared for a verbal war.

Firing the first volley yesterday, Lacson issued a statement calling Wycoco a "natural Goebbels"—after Adolf Hitler's propaganda minister—for "repeating in the media the malicious insinuation" that Lacson had a hand in the Nov. 24 abduction.

It was the first time Lacson, who in November 1999 was chosen by then President Joseph Estrada over Wycoco as Philippine National Police chief, publicly lashed out at the NBI chief in connection with the Dacer case.

"Wycoco keeps on harping in the media that I may have something to do with Dacer's disappearance, but in truth and in fact, he knows I have nothing to do with it," said the candidate from the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Puwersa ng Masa coalition.

Hot seat

During the same forum at which Almonte revealed the letter, Wycoco found himself in the hot seat as Dacer's family, human rights groups, and reporters urged him to name the mastermind behind the abduction.

Amid the clamor to name names, Wycoco answered: "Everybody has an idea of who the mastermind is."

"I have my own thoughts on the matter. But I wish I could get the evidence that would link Soberano to the mastermind. Once I get that evidence, early the following morning at the first crack of dawn, I will file charges against that guy," he said.

Never checked

Lacson enumerated a dozen instances reported in newspapers in which Wycoco purportedly insinuated that the senatorial candidate had masterminded the abduction and had it carried out by his then subordinates at the PAOCTF.

"The problem is the media never bothered to check whether the things being said by Wycoco are true and verified through available evidence," he said.

Lacson said he "cannot blame the media for always writing what Wycoco says since he is good copy and he knows how to handle reporters, a trait he learned when he handled a select group of reporters in Camp Crame when he was the Public Information Office chief."

The Macapagal administration, he said, has "found a natural Goebbels in Wycoco," claiming the NBI chief has been employed to spearhead a demolition job against him as an opposition candidate.

"Falsehood becomes truth if one keeps repeating it," Lacson said, mouthing a famous Goebbels' principle on conditioning the public mind through propaganda.

Begging for results

Dacer's family, for its part, reiterated its disgust over the slow pace of the investigation.

"Our friends can't understand why (our) father's case is not going anywhere. It pains me. We've been begging for results for a long time," Sabina said at the Pasig forum.

"It's difficult for us to accept that nobody knows anything. The bottom line is that we still don't know what happened to him," her husband added.

Lollipops, calling cards, Homer Simpson . . .

(From page A1)

ing and being moved in a vast global game.

For Spain, it's Chupa Chups lollipops rolling off assembly lines—tea-flavored for China, chili-pepper-flavored for Mexico. In Slovakia, it's Valentina Somova grabbing two packages of Thai ramen from the shelf at Tesco, a British supermarket chain. For the South Pacific island nation of Tuvalu, it's a $4-million road funded by selling off its Internet suffix, ".tv." In Togo, it's a West African vendor thrusting a CD of Kenny Rogers' greatest hits at passing motorists.

A connected planet: more, faster, bigger, farther. Borders opening, barriers falling. Confusion and exhilaration.

When the Thai currency collapses, brokers in Omaha notice. Cut cocoa prices in the United States and farmers suffer in West Africa. Move a Swedish company's cell-phone production line to Singapore and Estonia's economy winces. Has the "Love virus" e-mailed from the Philippines infected a business in Minneapolis or Melbourne? Call a crack team of Romanian virus-busters.

Globalization has always been with us in some form. It traveled with merchants who shepherded nutmeg and cumin and peppercorns along Eurasian trade routes. It was carried on the shoulders of slaves herded across oceans. It moved with missionaries who pushed into African and Amazonian interiors carrying the word of their god.

But now: acceleration. Wires and radio waves, satellites and airplanes and gigabytes, penetrating old borders and erecting new ones. Cultural collisions and connections, once extraordinary, suddenly commonplace. Millions adoring Madonna and child—and the father, Guy Ritchie, too. Humans who never heard Homer's epic poetry, now hearing Homer Simpson's stomach gurgle. All the world at once.

Watch the dramas unfold in miniature, plucked from the rushing river of human events. Millions of transactions and communications, relationships formed and severed and formed again. Motion and speed, profit and poverty. And deep anger—at the speed of change, at lives upended, at America spreading across cultures.

The world is stitching itself together. There is no turning back.

March 15, 2001: One random day to check in on a connected planet.

Made in China

In Montoursville, Pennsyvania, Betzi Lyon walks through her camping supply store: "I often wonder what people in China think of us over here. I mean, if you think about it, they make just about all of our stuff."

Not all, but a lot—even though Lyon tries to sell American when possible. On her shelves, goods from mainland China are joined by Montoursville-logo baseball caps from Taiwan and tents from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Korea. A heavy down coat originates in sweltering Bangladesh.

Across the world, on the fifth floor of Chaity Apparels Ltd. in Dhaka, Bangladesh, women in lime and orange smocks sew apparel for export. Shahera Begum, 22, stitches jacket cuffs for clients like Nike, Wal-Mart and Sears. Not that she gives it much thought.

"The clothes are shipped abroad and foreigners wear them. I don't know where they go," she said. "Why should I bother to ask?"

The stream of consumer goods to which she contributes courses across trade routes that are being redrawn daily as deals are struck, factories opened, technologies improved and inexpensive labor flourish.

Production costs can drive companies to where the cheap labor is. When Huffy Bicycle Co. closed its DeSoto County, Mississippi, plant in 1999, saying it was more economical to manufacture abroad, 160 workers lost their jobs.

In Vietnam, five factories that do contract work for Oregon's Nike Inc. produce 44 million shoes each year. In Nike's Chang Shin factory, workers enter under a giant Swoosh. Some 150 production steps later, the footwear they make winds up in boxes stamped "Made in Vietnam." These are destined for places like the Foot Locker at Pheasant Lane Mall in Nashua, New Hampshire, or the Nike outlet off I-71 in Jeffersonville, Ohio.

Nearby, Huynh Thi Xuan Huong, 29, guides a shapeless leather upper through a threading machine, attaching it to a foot-shaped sock liner. She does this up to 2,000 times a day, and she's amazed to hear that the shoes she makes can sell for triple her monthly earnings of 652,500 dong ($45).

Cindy Taylor of Gallatin Gateway, Montana, sees it a bit differently. Visiting a Niketown store in Atlanta a few hours later, she says inexpensive labor is fine if it is driven by the local market.

"If what they pay isn't the going rate, then they couldn't get anybody to work there," Taylor said. "If they made them in America, we couldn't afford to buy them."

'The Simpsons' in Korea

Inside a gray building in Seoul at mid-afternoon finds Kim Nak-joong correcting a problem with the product. The chin and belly don't look quite right, it seems. And when you're drawing Homer Simpson, those details matter.

"It looks easy, but this guy is quite hard to draw," said Kim, director of a 13-member team at AKOM Production Co. that draws "The Simpsons" for Fox.

Nearby, Tak Sun-ok paints hair on a "Simpsons" guest, Bill Cosby. "It's an interesting concept that people in faraway countries would watch what I painted," she mused.

Yet Kim and Tak are oddly disconnected with the show's home base in North Hollywood, an ocean away.

"I have sent work over to people for years and years and years," said animation director Mark Kirkland. And Kim? "He's been on the show longer than I have and I've never met him. I've just occasionally sent him a fax saying, 'Thanks for doing a great job.'"

Such strange juxtapositions have become commonplace—connections and disconnections coexisting, geography being both irrelevant and insurmountable.

Conflicting cultures

Then there's the "Leonardo."

In Kabul, the Afghan capital and headquarters of the anti-Western Taliban, the movie "Titanic" is wildly popular. A rickety old bus sports a picture of the ocean liner. When vendors sell their last produce at day's end, they shout: "Titanic apples, Titanic oranges."

But Leonardo DiCaprio haircuts were going too far, the Taliban said. So now, precautions are required. Barbers can do a Leonardo, but only for certain customers, at night, in a hidden room.

Such conflict is inevitable: different cultures, different values, and bumpy intersections.

It means that, when doing business in China, you offer your business card with both hands.

Neville Finlay, owner of Finlay's Food Ltd. of Manchester, England, didn't and he didn't bow either. He was shut out of a deal.

"I can understand," he said. "If someone comes to Manchester and spends two hours bowing across the table, they're not going to get very far either."

It means that in Copenhagen, Carlsberg lab manager Jane Harck Moeller conducts tastings with reps from Russian and Lithuanian breweries, both Carlsberg subsidiaries, to ensure beverages match local tastes.

It means that in Athens, the venerable Greek alphabet is so troublesome for computer users that they enlist Greeklish, a Latin-letter hybrid, when their Greek fonts aren't welcome.

It also means confusion, as people from different backgrounds try to make sense of the newfound cultural melange.

AKOM chair Nelson Shin sees this regularly with "The Simpsons" and Korean culture: "Bart often says 'Hey, man' to his father. In Koreans' Confucius mindset, it is morally despicable."

The mighty dollar

"The Buck Starts Here," it says on a machine clacking in the bowels of a downtown Washington building. But where it stops, nobody knows.

Dollars, printed in the US government's 24-hour money factory, will scatter across a world hungry for the one American product nobody else can make. On March 15, 2001, a total of 23,763,200 notes came into existence. And wherever you go in the world, people spend them: Of the $500 billion in US currency out there, more than half is circulating outside the United States.

At 7:05 a.m., at a centuries-old market in the hills of Saquisili, Ecuador, Jorge Martinez pockets $140 of it.

He has just sold a hog, and he holds the $10 bills up to make sure they're real. Nearby, mestizo men wearing Nike baseball caps and carrying fistfuls of Hamiltons and Jacksons yank livestock from their trucks.

This is your world on March 15, 2001, with more choices than ever.

Choices for people in the Jor Bagh neighborhood of New Delhi who can stop at a store called Steakhouse to buy a container of Blue Bunny Double Strawberry Ice Cream made by Wells Dairy in Le Mars, Iowa.

Choices in Bangkok and Bratislava and points in between, where Tesco offers Spanish kumquats, Ivorian pineapples, Indonesian soy sauce, Italian gnocchi.

But choices can produce problems, an unease that, as businesses and governments melt together and boundaries blur, a world of borderless trade and communication can trample its inhabitants.

Zapatista rebels from Mexico's southern Chiapas state say President Vicente Fox wants to fill pine-covered mountains "with gas stations, shopping malls and plastic play lands." Around the world, anti-corporate activists complain of oil drilling and forest clear-cutting and worker exploitation and hamburger hegemony.

And when the tectonic plates of economics shift, lives change.

In Tallinn, capital of the formerly Soviet Estonia, a subsidiary of a Finnish company called Elcoteq has built millions of questions that beg answers: Should everybody's way of life be the same, regardless of ethnicity or nationality? Should a decision made in a boardroom in one hemisphere cost workers jobs in another? What do we make of a world where Maine's monkfish livers are hurried to the steaming soup bowls of Japan, where, in Isabel Rodrigues' house in the remote western Amazon, the mud wall is lined with cans of Nestle's powdered milk?

Dramas in miniature, inscribed in all fonts in the Book of Earth, ever unfolding. The pace only gets faster. Everything moving, accelerating, changing.

A planet is stitching itself together—for good and bad. And however it unfolds, what a show it will be. *AP*

Too harsh, justice says of dismissal

(From page A1)

Asked whether he thought the punishment for Demetria was too harsh, Khan said: "The court views the punishment as justified. You have to realize that in the case of Justice Demetria, the standards of judicial ethics required of him were high."

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court released an 18-page decision declaring Demetria guilty of violating the Code of Judicial Conduct.

The court said it was improper for Demetria to personally ask State Prosecutor Pablo Formaran III to drop his motion asking Manila Judge Manuel Muro to inhibit himself from handling the drug trafficking case of Yu Yuk Lai.

Demetria visited Formaran's office on July 18, 2000 with his close friend, lawyer Reinerio Paas and Yu's alleged lover Go Teng Kok, president of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association.

Paas was there as Go's legal counsel. Demetria admitted to the justices that he also accompanied Paas to the office of then Justice Secretary Artemio Tuquero because the lawyer was applying for a position in the appeals court.

Go yesterday said he was "very sorry and upset" about the dismissal of Demetria.

"I don't know how I can express these emotions. He was just a casualty in this and I feel guilty," Go told the INQUIRER in Filipino during a phone interview.

Go denied knowing Demetria personally.

He reiterated that he never approached Demetria to ask him to intercede in the case of Yu.

Not a girlfriend

Go stressed that Yu was not his girlfriend but a cousin of his wife. He said the grandfather of his wife and Yu's grandfather were cousins.

The Supreme Court said Demetria faulted Formaran for requesting Muro to inhibit himself from handling the case on the basis of an anonymous complaint. The complaint came from Manila court employees unhappy with the judge's performance.

The Supreme Court also scored Demetria for making a follow-up call to Formaran's boss, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, to reiterate his request.

The tribunal is convinced that Demetria took advantage of his moral ascendancy over Zuño when he made the call to the chief prosecutor's office. Demetria was a former undersecretary of the Department of Justice and one-time acting secretary.

"There was no immorality involved. There was no money involved. Why did the justices have to treat me so severely," Demetria said in Filipino in an interview late yesterday morning.

He said that some Supreme Court justices had also intervened in certain cases.

Demetria remembered a scandal not long ago, which involved certain Supreme Court justices who wrote then Tanodbayan Raul Gonzalez about cases pending in his office.

Dear Raul letters

"If you remember some time ago, there were Supreme Court justices, who interfered in cases with the Tanodbayan. They had letters—the 'Dear Raul' letters," he said.

"Were the Supreme Court justices involved ever disciplined? No. But Raul, he was suspended from practicing law," he said.

Demetria also cited the case of a Sandiganbayan justice whom he refused to name. He said the justice "was merely reprimanded" for an offense.

"Assuming that I told Formaran to speed up the resolution of the case, I did not say 'absolve him,'" Demetria said in Filipino.

He said Formaran was inaccurate when the prosecutor quoted him as saying that he was the one who asked that the motion to inhibit Judge Muro be dropped.

"It was actually Go Teng Kok who made that request," he said.

"I remember that there were six persons in Formaran's office then. How come he was the only one who heard me say that? Even his own secretary said 'I did not say that (during the investigation that followed),'" Demetria said.

On the alleged call he made to Zuño's office, Demetria recalled that the chief prosecutor had mentioned that the caller did not identify himself.

"(Zuño) said he was not familiar with my voice. He merely relied (on) his secretary (who said) that the caller was from the Office of the Ombudsman. His secretary was never presented (in the investigation)," Demetria said.

Formaran, in a separate interview, said Demetria missed the point if he insisted that the delay in Yu's case was the issue.

"It's not the delay. It's about influencing the case. Since Judge Muro started hearing the case, all motions filed in court were resolved in favor of the accused," Formaran said in Filipino.

He said he became alarmed when the defense panel filed a motion calling for a "demurrer to evidence."

"You can sense that they were rushing the case," Formaran said. "In a demurrer, after the prosecution commented on it, the case is already submitted for resolution. So on that basis, the court can decide whether to dismiss (the case) or not."

Formaran said the prosecution panel's worries were further triggered by Muro's decision to allow Yu's series of "baseless" hospital confinement.

It later turned out that Yu was using her alleged poor health as an excuse to play baccarat in at least two branches of Casino Filipino.

"If Demetria was not really involved in Yu's case, how come he had to personally accompany her supposed lover, Go Teng Kok, to his office?" Formaran asked.

The prosecutor noted that the July 18 visit of Go was not the first. It was "the second or third." Formaran said the visits of the sports official were aimed at convincing him to drop the motion against Muro.

"The presence of Justice Demetria is a telling fact that they're trying to persuade us to do something in favor of the accused," Formaran said.

Yesterday afternoon, Formaran got the shock of his life when concerned parties informed him that the Office of the Ombudsman had cleared Demetria in its motu propio (by one's own initiative) investigation of the same case.

While the Supreme Court investigation focused on Demetria's administrative liability, the Ombudsman's probe centered on the criminal aspect of the case.

Formaran learned that as early as October 2000 the Office of the Ombudsman cleared Demetria, who was accused of obstructing justice.

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto yesterday clarified that his office only cleared Demetria's criminal liabilities.

"The Ombudsman dismissed the criminal case initiated against him because of insufficient evidence. But this does not preclude the government from slapping him with administrative sanctions," Desierto said.

Desierto said an Ombudsman panel headed by Assistant Ombudsman Abelardo Aportadera ruled on Nov. 7 last year that Demetria did not commit a criminal act. *With a report from AFP*

Manoling shrieks . . .

(From page A1)

Morato, a former Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, wants Siguion-Reyna, also a former MTRCB chair, jailed for "opening the doors to pornographic movies."

Morato said Siguion-Reyna, nicknamed "Tita Midz," was responsible for the proliferation of "*bomba* (bold)" films like "Live Show." Malacañang has banned "Live Show," a film about sex performers, upon the behest of Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin.

"I'm not being personal here, but this is all Armida's fault," Morato said at the Ciudad Fernandina forum.

"The Armida board (at the MTRCB) changed the rules and regulations (governing the classification of bold movies) so she could give her producer-friends the liberty of making such movies," Morato said.

Morato, who chaired the MTRCB for six years until 1992, said there used to be very clear guidelines on the classification of adult films.

He said that under his watch the MTRCB did not allow the showing of sex organs, double breast exposure, frontal nudity and pumping scenes, which made it easy to classify the films.

"Live Show" could indeed be considered pornographic using the old guidelines even if there was an attempt to restrain the sexual aspect of the story, according to Morato. He said the film nevertheless left more room for gross acts.

Under the new guidelines, which were drafted by Siguion-Reyna, the definition of pornographic or obscene acts was not as clear as that in Morato's time.

Morato described Siguion-Reyna's guidelines as "invalid."

He wondered aloud why Armida was still out in the open when the law required that people who make pornographic movies and the actors who portray crude characters be meted life imprisonment.

"She should be jailed, along with her *bomba* stars, for violating that law," Morato said.

Viva Films executive Vic del Rosario defended Siguion-Reyna, saying Morato and Siguion-Reyna had the same intention of improving the movie industry. But the methods of the two former MTRCB heads differed, according to Del Rosario.

Morato insisted that it was during his time in the MTRCB that the country's movie industry achieved its "golden years." He did not elaborate.

But he said that he even acted as a "guardian angel" of bold stars, who were exploited by producers.

Morato said Siguion-Reyna's rules, which are still being applied by the MTRCB, were "bringing the entire nation to the animal kingdom."

Siguion-Reyna was invited to speak in the same forum but did not come because she had an appointment with her dentist and hairdresser, according to the host.

Siguion-Reyna, the MTRCB chair of the Estrada administration, is running in Makati against newspaper publisher Teddy Boy Locsin for a seat in the House of Representatives.

Bryant vs Webber tonight

THE STARS will be out tonight on the "NBA on Viva TV" when the reigning NBA champion Los Angeles Lakers meet their division rivals, the Sacramento Kings, at 5:30 p.m. on IBC-13. Leading MVP candidates Kobe Bryant of the Lakers and Chris Webber of the Kings are expected to put on a big show against each other in today's highly anticipated showdown.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Datu solo pacesetter

FIDE Master Idelfonso Datu bested National Master Allan Sayson yesterday to grab the solo lead in the National Open Chess Championship at the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan. Datu posted his seventh straight win for seven points. Sayson was at six points with nine others, including top-seeded NM Richard Bitoon.

JERRY 10,000-POINT MAN

Aces silence Phone Pals, 74-63

GAMES TOMORROW *(Philsports)*
5:15 p.m. – Purefoods vs Ginebra
7:30 p.m. – Red Bull vs San Miguel

BY MARC ANTHONY REYES

ALASKA Milk found a way to fix up its messy third quarter, making some adjustments down the stretch for a 74-63 win over Mobiline in the PBA All-Filipino Cup at Philsports.

If the Aces improved from the third period to the payoff quarter, it was the opposite for the Phone Pals as they suddenly went off-line after playing splendidly in the third.

In fact, Mobiline even wrested the lead in the third through successive offensive forays by Jerry Codinera, Patrick Fran and Don Camaso.

Moreover, Codinera scored so many baskets in that quarter that in the fourth, game was halted to honor him for being the 13th player to make 10,000 points.

Alaska gained in the standings with a 6-6 card, while handing Mobiline its seventh loss in 12 games.

Codiñera hit that career-defining basket via a turnaround fallaway that gave Mobiline a 55-52 lead over Alaska in the last nine minutes.

Ironically, that brief awarding ceremony seemingly took the Phone Pals' momentum because after that, Mobiline was never the same again.

"My bench did a great job out there," said Alaska coach Tim Cone. "Especially after that disastrous third quarter. I almost pulled my hair off, literally, at that point."

There was no need, though, because Alaska's second unit led by Jon Ordonio, Eric Reyes and Bryan Gahol soon began to take some action which Mobiline failed to anticipate.

Shell Velocity assured itself of the twice-to-beat incentive with an 82-72 victory over Sta. Lucia Realty in the second game. The victory also enabled Shell to pull away from the field with a 9-3 card, while Sta. Lucia fell out of contention at 3-9.

Scores:

ALASKA 74 – Peek 18, Arigo 13, Santos 10, Duremdes 8, Gahol 8, Wallkvist 8, Reyes 6, Ordonio 3, Ticzon 0.

MOBILINE 63 – Camaso 18, Codinera 17, Fran 13, Cui 11, Ravena 2, Gonzales 2, Babilonia 0, Demape 0, Ejercito 0.

Quarters: 14-18, 37-34, 45-51, 74-63.

Shark, Ana clash for lead

STANDINGS	W	L		W	L
Shark	1	0	Ateneo-Pioneer	0	0
Ana	1	0	Welcoat	0	1
Montaña	1	0	Osaka	0	1
Giv Soap	0	0	Hapee	0	1
PharmaQuick	0	0			

GAMES TODAY *(Makati Coliseum)*
3:30 p.m.—PharmaQuick vs Giv Soap
5:30 p.m.—Ana Freezer vs Shark Energy

BY DENNIS U. EROA

SHARK Energy Drink and Ana Freezer Specialist clash for the solo leadership today even as rejuvenated Giv Soap battles PharmaQuick in the PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

The Power Boosters and the Freezer Kings opened their campaign with convincing victories.

Shark rallied from 17 points down to rip arch-rival Welcoat, 75-62 last Saturday, while Ana bucked the absence of a head coach and its starting slotman to trip Hapee Toothpaste, 80-64, last Tuesday.

"Ana is full of surprises. Despite our advantage in manpower, Ana cannot be taken lightly," said Shark coach Leo Austria after scouting Ana's game Tuesday against Hapee in the company of his assistants Dayong Mendoza and Jing Ruiz.

Gametime is set at 5:30 p.m., after the 3:30 p.m. clash between Giv Soap and PharmaQuick.

The addition of ex-pro Ogie Gumatay and NCAA scoring machine Nani Epondulan add depth to Giv's backcourt. Still around are Egay Billones, Eric de la Cuesta and rookie of the year Marlon Legaspi.

But PharmaQuick, the first team to be eliminated in the Challenge Cup, is fielding a brand-new lineup. It recruited ex-pros Joel Co and Braulio Lim and FEU standouts Leo Avenido and Gerard Jones.

Erwin Velez, a member of Shark's championship team, and former Blu Playmaker Jun Canoneo have also transferred to coach Bernie Fabiosa's charges.

Austria is sure to exploit Shark's height advantage against Ana which pins its hopes on Ariel de Castro, Dondon Mendoza, Rey Mendez, Ronald Tubid, Ariel Capus and Robin Mendoza.

Mendez, also the assistant playing mentor, said they must check Shark's high-leaping duo of Chester Tolomia and Gilbert Malabanan.

"Then there are the twin towers of Rysal Castro and Irvin Sotto," Mendez said.

Bata battles Pearl today

BY JUNE NAVARRO

FOR four years, American cue wizard Earl "The Pearl" Strickland has been itching to avenge his defeat at the hands of Efren "Bata" Reyes during their race-to-120 battle of attrition in Hong Kong.

Tonight, Strickland will get his wish as he clashes with Reyes at the start of the San Miguel Beer $20,000 "The Color of Money II" at the Casino Filipino in Parañaque City.

Though the game was shortened to a race-to-33 collision, Strickland said it wouldn't matter as long as he settles the score with "The Magician," whom he defeated in the recent US-RP 9-Ball Challenge in Alabang.

"Playing Reyes means you've always got to be on your toes," said the 39-year-old Strickland, a five-time US Open champion.

And if Strickland aspires to beat Reyes, he has to play clever owing to the loser's break format.

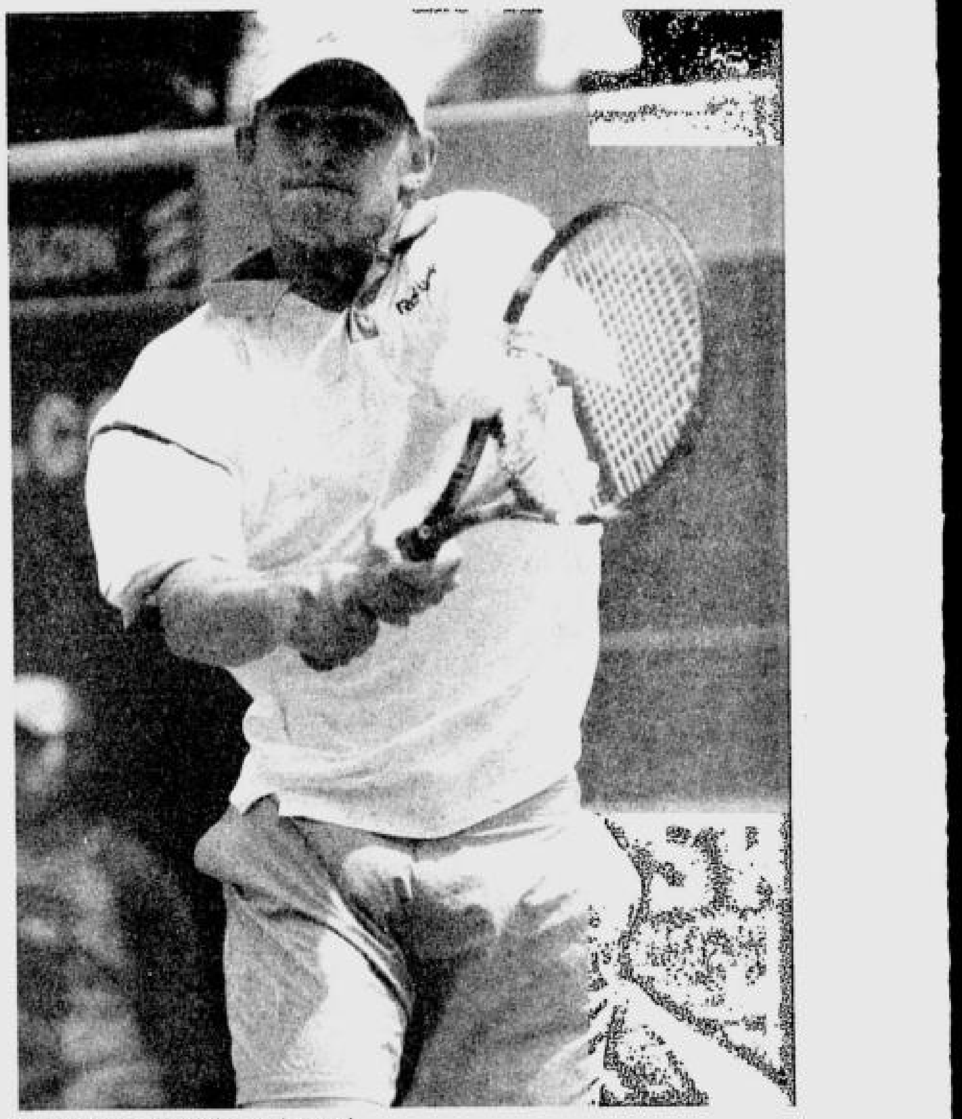
"I'll have to be very cautious. Instead of going for a 50-50 shot, playing safe is a better alternative," said Strickland.

The encounter between rising stars Leonardo Didal and Dennis Orcullo will serve as appetizers before Strickland and Reyes take the table at 7 p.m. in a race-to-11 confrontation.

Play will resume on Saturday as Reyes and Strickland clash in two race-to-11s, the first at 3 p.m. and the other at 8 p.m., to determine the winner of the $15,000 champion's purse. The runner-up will pocket $5,000.

Reyes rose from the grave, racked up 30 wins against Strickland's 11, and completed the turnaround, 120-117, to bring home the $100,000 prize during part I of their highly touted duel.

"I know what to expect. If he doesn't bring out the best in me, he'll take care of me," said Strickland.



RODDICK: Tips from Agassi. AP

Roddick in q'finals

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida —Andre Agassi watched in dismay from a broadcast booth as young Andy Roddick began to act his age Tuesday, losing four consecutive games and nearly blowing the first set at the Ericsson Open.

Then came a rain delay, and Agassi went downstairs to offer his heir apparent some advice.

"He kind of told me to get my head together a little bit and to calm down," Roddick said.

They also talked strategy, and Roddick put the tips to good use, regrouping to beat Andrei Pavel 7-6 (10), 6-2 and become the youngest men's quarterfinalist in tournament history.

Roddick, 18, said he wasn't surprised when Agassi sought him out during the rain delay. They're occasional hitting partners at Roddick's home in Boca Raton.

Coach Agassi, seeded third, advanced earlier with a walkover when Tommy Haas pulled out before their fourth-round match because of a sprained left foot. Agassi could meet Roddick in an all-American intergenerational final Sunday.

An all-Williams final remains possible Saturday. No. 3 Venus Williams became the first women's semifinalist by beating Jelena Dokic 6-2, 6-3. No. 5 Serena Williams plays No. 4 Jennifer Capriati on Wednesday.

No. 1 Martina Hingis overcame a set point and beat No. 10 Anke Huber 7-5, 6-0. Hingis will face Venus Williams on Thursday.

Jan-Michael Gambill reached the quarterfinals by beating Jonas Bjorkman 6-1, 6-2. He'll next play Gaston Gaudio, who upset No. 12 Juan Carlos Ferrero 6-0, 3-6, 6-3. *AP*

Harris stakes Rolex

TWO Rolex watches are up for grabs during the 5th Paul Harris Cup Golf Tournament at Tagaytay Midlands on April 2.

This was learned from Ramon Mayuga, chair of the organizing committee and incoming president of the sponsoring Rotary Club of Makati Ayala.

The first Rolex watch will be given to the hole-in-one winner while the second will be raffled among the participants in the tournament.

Mayuga said that more than 80 golfers have registered for the tournament, which is being held to honor the memory and accomplishments of Paul Harris, who, in 1905, as a young lawyer in Chicago, founded the first Rotary Club.

Its members were young men of different businesses and professions—men who wanted to be friends and be helpful to each other.

Hakeem powers Rockets

HOUSTON—Hakeem Olajuwon returned from the injured list just in time to contribute to a blowout second quarter as Houston handed Utah its worst defeat of the season, 109-86, in the NBA Tuesday night.

Olajuwon thought his season and possibly his career was over two weeks ago when doctors said he needed to be sidelined 3-to-6 months for treatment of a blood clot in his lower left leg, but further testing led to his return to the lineup. He finished with 11 points and seven rebounds in 21 minutes.

Steve Francis had 18 points and nine assists as the Rockets snapped a three-game losing streak.

Donyell Marshall scored 17 points for the Utah, which lost to the Rockets for only the second time in 16 games. The Jazz's previous worst loss was 105-90 to Sacramento on March 11.

Celtics 115, Hawks 112

Paul Pierce scored 41 points and Eric Williams hit a reverse layup with 17.8 seconds remaining to give the Boston Celtics a 115-112 overtime victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

Spurs 93, Hornets 79

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan scored 24 of his 34 points in the first half and grabbed 19 rebounds as San Antonio dealt Charlotte its third straight loss.

The NBA-leading Spurs reached the 50 victory mark for the 11th time since joining the league in 1976.

Raptors 101, Heat 92

In Miami, Vince Carter scored 38 points and Dell Curry added a season-high 23 as Toronto spoiled Alonzo Mourning's return to the Miami lineup.

Mourning had nine points and six rebounds in 19 minutes in his first action since being diagnosed with a kidney disease last October.

Complete results: Indiana 110, Washington 102; Boston 115, Atlanta 112, OT; Toronto 101, Miami 92; Houston 109, Utah 86; San Antonio 93, Charlotte 79; Sacramento 124, New York 117, OT; L.A. Clippers 101, Detroit 94. *AP*

Bubby Dacer golf tomorrow

FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos, Fil-Estate Chair Bob Sobrepeña and Bert Lina of Fed-Ex lead prominent personalities participating in the Bubby Dacer "Mr. White" Golf Cup to be held at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods tomorrow, March 30.

"Mr. White" Golf Cup is a joint project of The Manila Southwoods and the RPDEV which aims to raise funds for the family of Bubby Dacer, himself an avid golfer and a patron of the sport who has been missing for over four months already.

The event is managed by the Professional Sports Management Group composed of Buddy Resurreccion, Beth Menchavez, Chi Javier and Pancho Perea. Interested parties may call 887-8964.

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NBA - Sacramento Kings vs LA Lakers at 5:30 p.m. on IBC 13

NBA Special - NBA Showmen 2001 at 9:30 p.m. (r) on ESPN

Tivo NIT Basketball, Semifinal #2 tomorrow at 1 a.m. on ESPN

TENNIS: WTA Evert Cup Finals at 11 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Masters Series by Mercedes-Benz Ericsson Open, Men's Quarterfinal Match #3 tomorrow at 3 a.m. on ESPN

GOLF: PGA - The Players Championship, Final Round at 8 a.m. (r), Tour Highlights tomorrow at 1 a.m. on Star Sports

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Race 6—1. Walang Hanggan 2. Magic Fingers 3. Three of Heart 4. Star of Arabia

Race 7—1. My Indy 2. Heir Apparent 3. Something Best 4. Bagoba

Race 8—1. Royal Angel 2. Strong Alphonse 3. Snake Dancer 4. Marissa's Dianne

Cebu fight Saturday

HIGH-CALIBER boxing takes the spotlight on Saturday, March 31, when rising star Rodel Mayol of the Tony Aldeguer stable duels with ace Korean Jae Ho Kim in a 10-rounder at the Waterfront Hotel in Lahug, Cebu City.

Mayol sports an unblemished 5-0 win-loss mark with four knockouts, and is fresh from posting a lopsided win over touted Ken Nakajima, one of Japan's brightest hopefuls.

"Mayor has everything—power, speed, skills and determination. What is lacking is experience," said Aldeguer.

Aside from the Mayol-Kim encounter, three other Pinoy pugs will see action in the promotion dubbed "War at the Waterfront" against their foreign counterparts.

Ucap/Arnis derby fires off

BIG-TIME cockfighting starts at 5 p.m. today as the "8th Ucap/Arnis Master 6-Cock Derby" championship round rages at Mandaluyong Coliseum, bannering more than 60 quality fights. Derby host is popular sportsman Raymond Velayo, with Sagupaan Super Feeds and Lakpue Drug Inc. as sponsors.

Leading the pack are 12 bets with 2-0 (win-loss) cards each from a field of 51—the biggest number of entries registered so far in a regular Ucap derby this year.

Meanwhile, the submission of weights to the "Sir Richard Sa Ucap 4-Cock Derby" is tomorrow, from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. The event, hosted by upcoming derbyist Richard Lim, is on Saturday, March 31.

ANTONIO (second from right) receives the championship trophy from Philippine Tour Chair Bob Sobrepeña as CAP officials Jay Sobrepeña and King Rodrigo look on.

Antonio sr champ at Sherwood

IN A competition where length was the main requirement, Roger Antonio had to downgrade his expectations and beating his main rival in the CAP Seniors Challenge was already quite a feat.

Antonio missed the cut in the Ericsson-Smart Zed Sherwood Hills Classic all right but still P20,000 for a two-day job isn't bad at all.

With his scores of 76-80 at Sherwood Hills in Trece Martires, Cavite, Antonio snatched the third chapter of his continuing duel for senior supremacy against Mario Siodina.

"*Sumobra yata ang tanda natin para sa* course," said Antonio, who thus took a 2-1 edge over Siodina in three legs of the senior side of the Philippine Tour 2000 sponsored by College Assurance Plan.

The regular pro event, won by Antonio Lascuna after a thrilling shootout with Robert Pactolerin and Cassius Casas, had Ericsson, Smart-Zed and Sherwood Hills as joint sponsors, marking the return of the two telecommunication giants into big-time local golf sponsorship.

Siodina fell seven strokes right at the opening round with an 8.3 and fell two strokes short of what could have been a magnificent rally as he managed to erase only five of the huge deficit with a 75. He settled for a share of second with Yukiharu Takahashi.

Takahashi, the Japanese expatriate who seemed set to stop the two-man domination after emerging the surprise first round leader with a 74-, didn't have enough power in his legs to last the test of endurance under the blistering summer heat.

Takahashi stumbled with a 74 in the final round.

Bobby Utchingco claimed solo third with his 84-75 while Roger Retuerto, the guru of Frankie Miñoza, was in the money in his first stint in the tour by tying for fourth and fifth place with Sonny Orquisa and Gerry Nadales.

The seniors tackle a tougher test next, the rolling fairways of Forest Hills in Antipolo.

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LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

▩ NBI seizes P21M in pirated software A20

▩ Shabu-pushing OC

All witnesses to slay of UST student in hiding, say cops

CHUA

BY JEROME ANING

MANILA police yesterday said they have reached a standstill in their investigation of the killing of University of Sto. Tomas student Mark Chua because no witnesses have come forward.

The investigators made the admission even as Chua's family insisted that he was killed because of his exposé of alleged corruption in the school's Reserve Officers Training Corps.

"It's difficult to establish a link between the kidnap-slaying and the exposé because all our possible witnesses have gone into hiding," Western Police District homicide section head Chief Insp. Juanito Taluban told the INQUIRER.

Taluban said the only hope of the investigators is Romulo Yumul, Chua's classmate at the UST College of Engineering who they said could provide details about the death threats that the

ALL/ A20

MMDA throws out Semirara

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority no longer has any plans to use Semirara Island in Antique province as dumping site for Metro Manila garbage, according to MMDA Chair Benjamin Abalos.

"I am not so sure if the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has indeed issued an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for the use of the landfill," Abalos said. "But I already told President Gloria Arroyo-Macapagal that the MMDA no longer has any intention whatsoever to use the Semirara landfill."

He explained that the MMDA would now resort to waste segregation and recycling, in accordance with Republic Act No. 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

Agnes E. Donato

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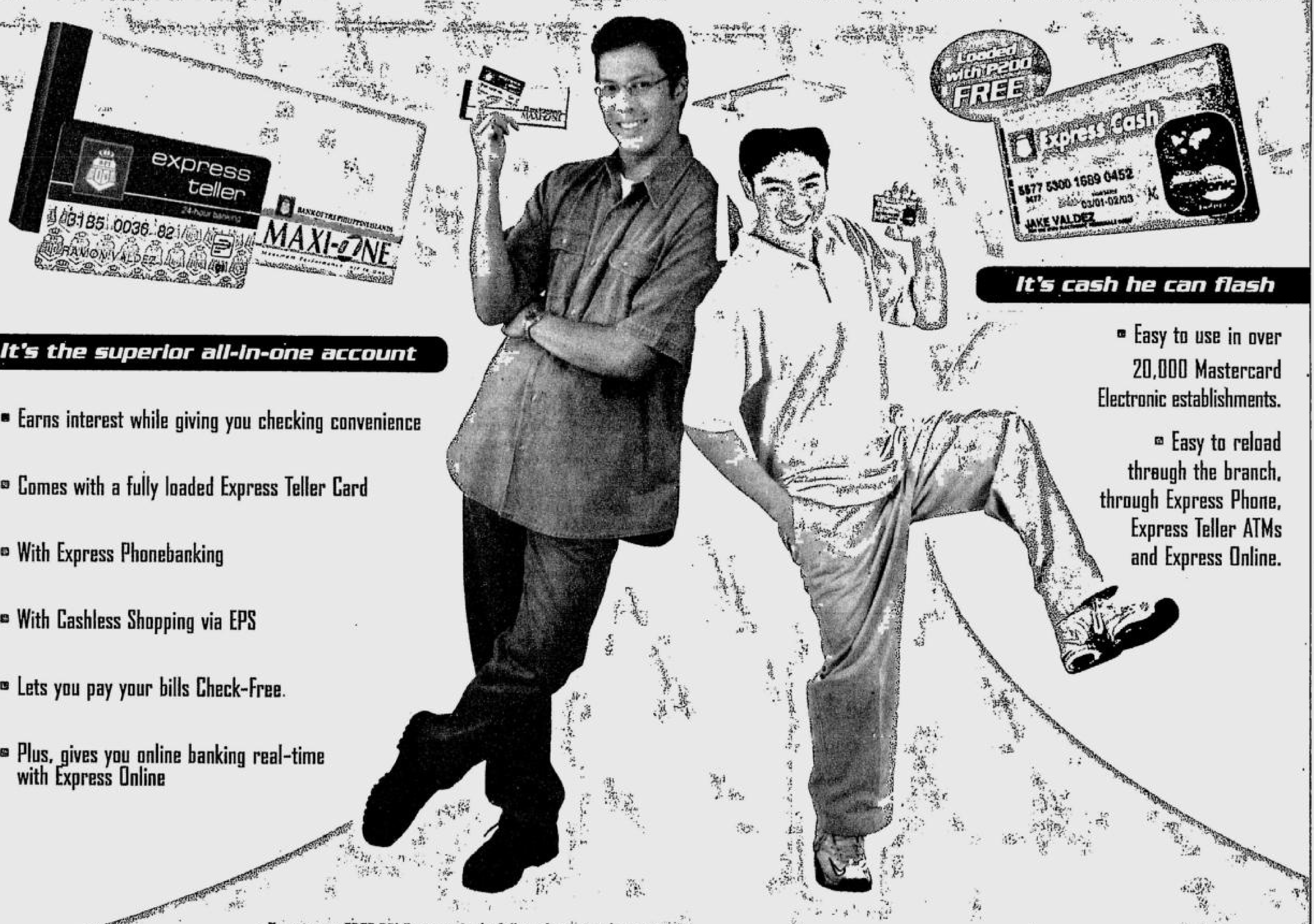

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3 boys say gay tutor molested them

By Jerome Aning

AN ALLEGED homosexual professor at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila is being sought by police after three of his students accused him of molesting them in exchange for passing marks.

Supt. Ernesto Ibay, commander of Western Police District Station 5, identified the suspect as Rogie Nino, 30, who teaches computer science subjects at PLM.

The three students, all taking up information technology courses, told investigator SPO1 Carlos Santos that they approached Nino to ask for reconsideration because they were in danger of failing in Fundamentals of Problem Solving and Programming.

In February, the suspect asked one of the victims, an 18-year-old boy, to go with him to his apartment on Fifth Avenue in Grace Park, Caloocan City, if the boy really wanted to have a passing grade.

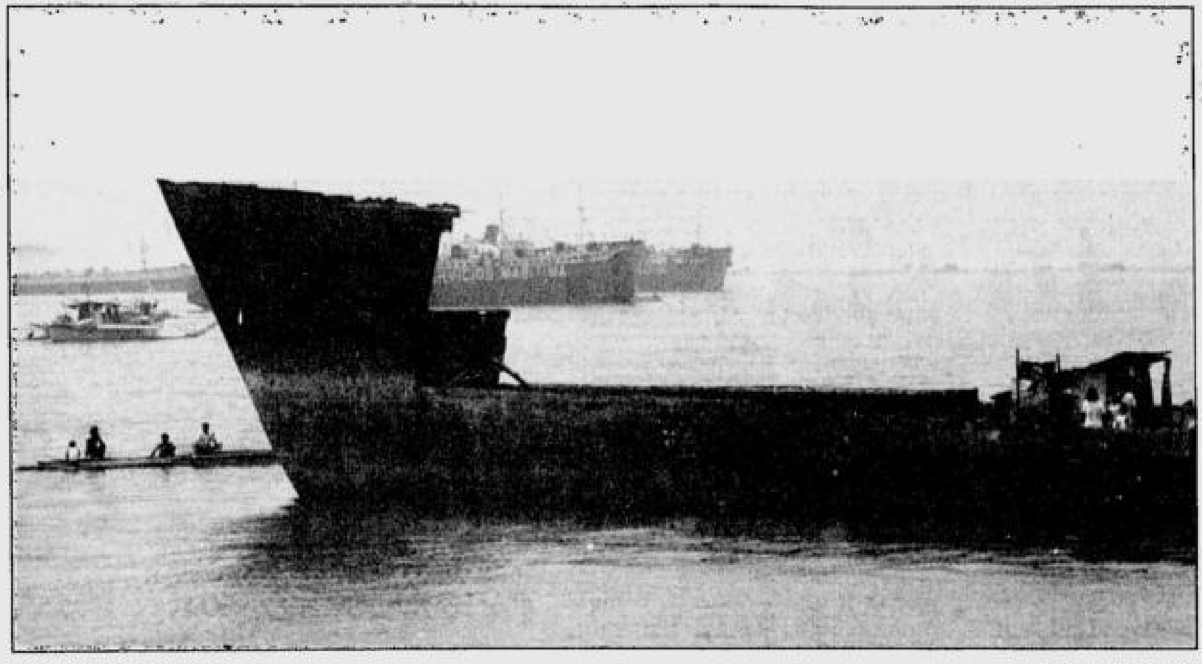
The victim said he went to the house, thinking his professor would give him additional projects to improve his grades.

But instead, the victim claimed Nino brought him to his room and forced the boy to have oral sex.

The two other victims, both 17, said the suspect summoned them to a room in PLM on March 24.

They said they had no idea that the "negotiation" for their grades would involve molestation.

Nino is facing charges of acts of lasciviousness and violation of Republic Act No. 7610, or the Anti-Child Abuse Law.



HOUSEBOAT

ROMY HOMILLADA

Enterprising squatters have commandeered this rusted hulk lying off Dagat-dagatan in Tondo, Manila, and have set up a makeshift dwelling on the deck (right).

NBI seizes ₱21M in pirated software

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation seized P21 million worth of computer equipment and software from a computer firm partly owned by Japanese nationals in Pasig City.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said the Japanese and Filipino owners of the Pasco-Certeza Computer Mapping Corporation have been engaging in software piracy.

Arrested were Rene Certeza, Federico Nadela, Masatoshi Fujii, Harou Takeuchi, Akehicko Nakay, Fernando G. del Rosario, Reynaldo R. Adorador and Rico Pajaganas.

Wycoco showed to reporters yesterday some of the 20 personal computer units seized from the suspects who are holding office at the 3rd floor of Strata 1000 Building, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center in Pasig City.

The agency also seized 81 central processing units and a CD-Rom disc containing what is said to be a pirated version of Autocad release 41, a computer-aided design program used by architects, engineers and computer artists.

Lawyer Rafael Ragos led a team of agents from the NBI's Background Investigation Division in an operation on March 16.

Details of the operation were revealed to reporters only yesterday.

"The computer units will serve as evidence against officials of the computer firm who have violated the copyright infringement law," Ragos said.

On March 15, lawyer Anthony D. Bengzon of Autodesk Inc., manufacturer and local distributor of Autocad software products, filed a complaint with the NBI, Ragos said.

Bengzon claimed that the Pasco-Certeza firm was engaged in the illegal and unauthorized copying, reproduction and use of counterfeit Autocad program.

The BID conducted investigation and learned that the computer firm was indeed using pirated software in violation of the country's copyright infringement law.

Ragos then applied for a search warrant, which was issued by Judge Antonio Eugenio Jr. of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 1.

"In the afternoon of March 16, BID operatives conducted a search in the premises of Pasco-Certeza Computer Corp., and confiscated the items which are now in the safekeeping of the NBI," Ragos said.

Cops nab mother for selling shabu at corner store

By Jerome Aning

POLICE have arrested a 25-year-old mother allegedly for selling shabu in front of a corner store in Sta. Cruz, Manila on Tuesday night.

Rowena Eugenio, of M. Hizon Street, Sta. Cruz, told police she was forced to sell drugs because she needed the money to buy milk for her newborn.

"Milk is expensive nowadays," Eugenio said. "I'm planning to get out of this business as soon as I earn enough money."

Eugenio was arrested in a buy-bust right in front of a store on M. Hizon Street about 10 p.m., said Chief Insp. Jose Mario Espino, head of the Western Police District's drug enforcement group.

The single mother has been under surveillance for a month and police have gathered enough evidence to pin down Eugenio for drug pushing, SPO1 Victor Inciong told reporters.

But the lawmen reportedly pitied Eugenio and postponed arresting her, that is, until after she had given birth.

Most of Eugenio's customers were delinquents roaming M. Hizon at night. Police learned the suspect did not own or operate the store, which belongs to a neighbor.

She would only sit in front of the store and wait for customers, police said.

An undercover lawman posing as a buyer announced her arrest when she handed him a sachet of shabu for P500 cash. Eugenio tried to make a run for it but was caught.

Five other heat-sealed plastic sachets said to be containing shabu were found scattered on the ground not far from where Eugenio was arrested.

Police believed the sachets belonged to Eugenio, who tried to get rid of the evidence.

Eugenio is facing charges for violating Sections 15 and 16 of the Dangerous Drugs Act.

'Gapos Gang' suspected in killing of Japanese

By Alcuin Papa

A GROUP known to police as the "Gapos Gang," whose members tie up their victims before robbing them, is suspected to be responsible for the murder and robbery of a Japanese in Pasay City last Sunday, police said yesterday.

Pasay police said they have identified four members of the group, including a woman, as being responsible for the death of Koichi Kaneko, 70, a businessman renting room number 2005 of the EGI Mall at the corner of Buendia and Taft avenues.

Kaneko was found dead in the atrium of the building's seventh floor. Investigators said he was pushed out of the window of his room on the 20th floor.

Roving security guards of the building found Kaneko dead about 10:45 a.m. His black leather belt was strapped around his body.

Police also found Kaneko's room in disarray but they have not yet determined whether any cash or valuables were missing.

Kaneko was also wearing a belt bag with some cash and his passport when he was found dead.

He was last seen at 12:30 a.m. Sunday when he arrived at the building drunk, the guards said.

PO2 Joey Salazar of the Pasay City Police Criminal Investigation Division said the gang preys on foreigners who check into small hotels like the EGI.

Police also believed that the group had been watching the movements of Kaneko before they pounced on him.

Police said the group uses pretty women as fronts to gain access into the rooms of the foreigners. Investigators said in Kaneko's case, one woman knocked on Kaneko's door the morning he was killed.

When Kaneko let the girl in, three men barged in, tied him up and ransacked his room before pushing him out the window, police said.

It was also learned that on March 23, Kaneko was victimized by the same group. He was robbed in his room and was discovered tied up with plastic tape.

Police said he lost a cell phone, a camera and a still undetermined amount of cash.

The building manager, identified as Eduardo Mata, 38, did not report the robbery to police for still unknown reasons.

Senior Insp. Reynaldo Baral, chief of the Pasay City Police CID, said the same robbers who victimized Kaneko on March 23 might be the same suspects who robbed and killed him on Sunday.

The autopsy report said the victim suffered a serious head injury and bruises in different parts of the body, which meant he was probably hit with a long hard object and beaten before he was pushed out of his window.

Woman pilot a pride of her gender

On Target

Ramon Tulfo

ON THE dismissal of Court of Appeals Justice Demetrio Demetria for intervening in the case of a suspected drug trafficker, it's good to know that there are still government officials who don't succumb to pressures from the high and mighty. These officials include Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuno and State Prosecutor Pablo C. Formaran III.

Demetria allegedly put tremendous pressure on Zuno and Formaran to withdraw their motion seeking to inhibit Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Manuel Muro from trying a drug trafficking case.

***

Formaran and Zuno filed a motion to inhibit the judge from the case after they saw that the judge was biased in favor of the accused, Yu Yuk Lai.

Muro had allowed Yu, detained at the Manila City Jail, to be confined in a hospital. But Yu was always seen gambling in the casinos when she was supposed to be in the hospital. This was the reason Zuno and Formaran filed a petition to have the judge inhibit himself from trying the drug smuggling case against Yu.

Demetria went to Zuno and Formaran and demanded they withdraw their petition.

The appellate court justice had a hold on the two prosecutors not only because of his lofty position in the judiciary. He used to be the superior of Zuno and Formaran when he was the undersecretary of justice and, for a while, secretary of justice during the term of President Ramos.

Mssrs Zuno and Formaran, may your tribe increase!

***

Malacañang's assurance that the military would only have a supporting role in the intensified campaign against kidnappers is well received by the people, who are wary of the increasing presence of soldiers in the streets. For one, soldiers have set up checkpoints along national highways to apprehend people who carry guns, which are banned during the election period.

The Macapagal government says the soldiers' duties will be limited to intelligence gathering and augmenting the police force. The police will still lead in going after kidnap-for-ransom gangs, smugglers and drug traffickers.

The military's role in the crime drive should be well defined and should be put on paper. We don't want to see soldiers and policemen shooting each other for the custody of a kidnap suspect.

***

Here's a piece of unsolicited advice: Why doesn't Malacañang retain Deputy Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. as the chief of the about-to-be-created multi-agency task force?

The task force will replace the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) which Ebdane now heads. PAOCTF was once headed by former National Police chief Panfilo Lacson in a concurrent capacity.

Ebdane is doing very well as PAOCTF chief, so why get another guy to head the new task force?

***

Air Force Lt. Mary Grace Baloyo did her gender proud when she chose to stay in the plane while it was going down so she could save innocent civilians.

Baloyo, a graduate of the Philippine Air Force Flying School, steered the plane away from houses. Had she bailed out of the plane, like her instructor Capt. Ben Nasayao did, the aircraft could have plowed into a row of houses.

Baloyo's motherly instincts saved many lives. I wonder whether Nasayao could live with the woman's heroism?

***

Dolores Ursua-Sy writes to appeal for a speedy trial for Supt. Artemio E. Lamson, chief of police of Malasiqui, Pangasinan, principal suspect in the murder of her husband.

Fernando Fortich Sy was branch manager of the Equitable PCI Bank in San Carlos City when he was killed during a robbery on Feb. 19, 2001.

Lamson and two of his subordinates are detained. They are not allowed to post bail since the case against them is murder.

Ms Sy laments the fact that the suspects are law enforcement officers who were supposed to protect her husband from criminal elements.

If Lamson and his co-accused are found guilty, they should be meted out the death penalty.

***

Chief Supt. Renato M. Paredes, director of the PNP Traffic Management Group (TMG), has reacted to an item in this space on March 20. This space said that there are many road accidents because traffic authorities are not doing their job.

Paredes said my acccusation of "police inaction" bothered him so much.

"I have to admit that not all the main highways can be covered by my men in the field due to shortage of personnel and mobility. And because of this, I have written and called on all motor vehicle owners, drivers and operators to help ease traffic and prevent accidents by simply being law abiding citizens," Paredes said.

All witnesses . . .

(From page A19)

two of them received when they filed their complaint against officials of the UST ROTC.

Investigators from the WPD said they hope to build a case by establishing, through Yumul's testimony, that the death threats he and Chua received had led to Chua's abduction and murder.

Investigators led by SPO3 Steve Casimiro said they have learned many details surrounding Chua's disappearance on March 15, including efforts by the suspects to make the Chua family believe that he was kidnapped.

But the details could not identify the suspects, Taluban said.

He added that among the possible witnesses are those who saw the people who abducted Chua and those who threw his body into the Pasig River, where it was found on March 18.

Chua's father has accused ROTC officials, who were sacked because of his son's and Yumul's revelations, as the brains behind the abduction and the killing. But Taluban said the city prosecutor would not appreciate all the evidence they have at present.

"The WPD will be in hot water if it joins in accusing the dismissed ROTC officials of complicity in the case without strong evidence," Taluban said. "They can sue us for destroying their reputation and honor."

Police learned that Yumul and some of the students interviewed by the UST newspaper The Varsitarian about the alleged anomalies in the ROTC were excused by the school authorities from taking the final examinations or were allowed to go on vacation.

Last December, Chua and Yumul accused officials of the Department of Military Science and Tactics, which is in charge of the ROTC, of accepting bribes and extorting money from cadets.

The complaint was filed with the Department of National Defense's Regional Community Defense Group, which conducted a month-long investigation and ordered the relief of the UST ROTC commandant, Maj. Demy Tejares, and other officials.

Marikina ordinance requires DNA test for rape suspects

THE MARIKINA City Council recently upheld the rights of abused women when it enacted an ordinance requiring rape suspects to undergo DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) or paternity testing.

Councilor Marion Andres, M.D., authored Ordinance 056, Series of 2001, requiring all individuals with pending court cases for rape, seduction and abduction, to undergo DNA or paternity testing.

The ordinance likewise applies to men who refuse to acknowledge, and provide support to, children born out of their relationship with women seeking their support.

Council members noted a rise in incidents where men force themselves on women as well as those where women were seduced and abducted through deceit, promises, lies and other schemes only to be sexually abused.

This prompted the council to pass the ordinance.

The council also noted cases where women are lured into a sexual relationship after which the men would deny responsibility for their acts, especially when they impregnate the women.

In some cases, victims, who sued the suspects, seeking damages or support, were the ones to suffer loss when their cases failed to prosper for lack of evidence and willful denial or refusal of the accused to admit guilt or acknowledge paternity of the child.

Councilor Andres explained that with DNA testing, the proof of guilt for crimes of rape, seduction, and abduction can readily be established, as well as the paternal relation of an alleged father to a child.

In cases where the victims are physically or mentally incapacitated, the ordinance provides that her child, represented by a legal or designated guardian, can initiate and seek the court's intercession to conduct DNA or paternity testing on the alleged father.

The testing will be undertaken by the City Health Office or any duly recognized and authorized medical agencies of the government like the National Bureau of Investigation, the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory, or any private hospital or laboratory duly accredited by the Department of Health.

The abused woman would have to bear the expenses incurred in conducting the testing and examination, which would be submitted to the court as evidence or proof of paternity or commission of the crime.

Results of DNA testing and blood examination will be contained in an official report and will be submitted to the court as evidence.

Pinoy Times digs up missing Palace treasures

IN DECEMBER 1998, when Joseph Estrada and his family moved into the newly renovated Presidential Residence within the Malacañang compound, a host of treasures were transferred there from the government-owned Goldenberg Mansions.

Among these treasures were an entire set of blue-and-white Spode dinnerware, (fine bone china used by royal families); Royal Crown Derby English bone china; Baccarat stemware; three silver Puiforcat soup tureens, each weighing two kilos and worth about a million pesos; Lenox plates; ivory bird cages; and a Penedese vase worth at least $2,000.

Altogether, the items taken from the Goldenberg Mansions are estimated to be worth millions of pesos. They have not been returned since the Estradas left Malacañang in January.

According to an exclusive report in the latest issue of Pinoy Times Special Edition, many of the items may have found their way to the former president's house in Greenhills.

In another exclusive story in the same issue, TV journalist Mari Kaimo describes the luxurious furnishings in the Presidential Residence and on the presidential yacht Ang Pangulo, whose renovation is estimated at P68 million.

AIM employees volunteer to MoVE people

THERE is an emerging breed of responsible young professionals who go beyond their corporate tasks to do something positive for the country.

Apparently inspired by the success of youth participation in the recent Edsa II, these yuppies now make the rounds of communities in Metro Manila and surrounding areas to conduct voter education.

They are now on the MoVE (Movement for Voter Empowerment). They have been to Ermita and Sampaloc, and would soon go to Tondo, Payatas and Laguna.

All MoVE volunteers work at the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) handling tasks that require a lot of cerebral work.

Gemma Cunanan, 32, is program manager at the Center for Development Management. Aileen Agulo, 32, is a senior researcher who is assisting an AIM professor in writing a book on excellent Asian companies. Jess Macasaet, 31, is senior researcher at the Center for Corporate Responsibility.

Other MoVE, volunteers include Henry Grageda, 34, of Investor Relations, Deanna Lijauco, 34, also of the Center for Development Management, and Erwin Nanez, 31, of the New Program Development division.

"It might sound corny, but we are all idealists," Macasaet confessed.

MoVe members have bonded together and utilized their core competencies to ensure that the change that People Power II started will be sustained, especially in the grassroots level.

MoVE conducts sessions on weekends, dig into their pockets for expenses, and brave the odds to help educate the voting public.

They underscore the people's capacity to choose the right leaders. Acting as facilitators, they elicit people's ideas, expound on the ideas, and concretize the ideas into actual action plans.

Eye openers

The first community dialogue they held on March 10 at Barangay Dos, Quirino Highway, Malate was only for about 30 participants. But 44 attended the session, which began at 9 a.m. and ended at noon.

Previous sessions, especially the one held in Malate, exposed MoVE members to eye-opening realities. When the participants were asked to recall why they voted for certain candidates in previous elections, many of the answers were "(the candidates) are approachable and are always willing to help)."

But what hit them hard were the participants' dreams for their families: education, good health, and livelihood.

None of the participants had finished college and only two had some form of livelihood. No one had access to necessary and efficient health care services.

When told that these were essential performance indicators of government officials that should be provided and should not be taken as favors, many were reflective.

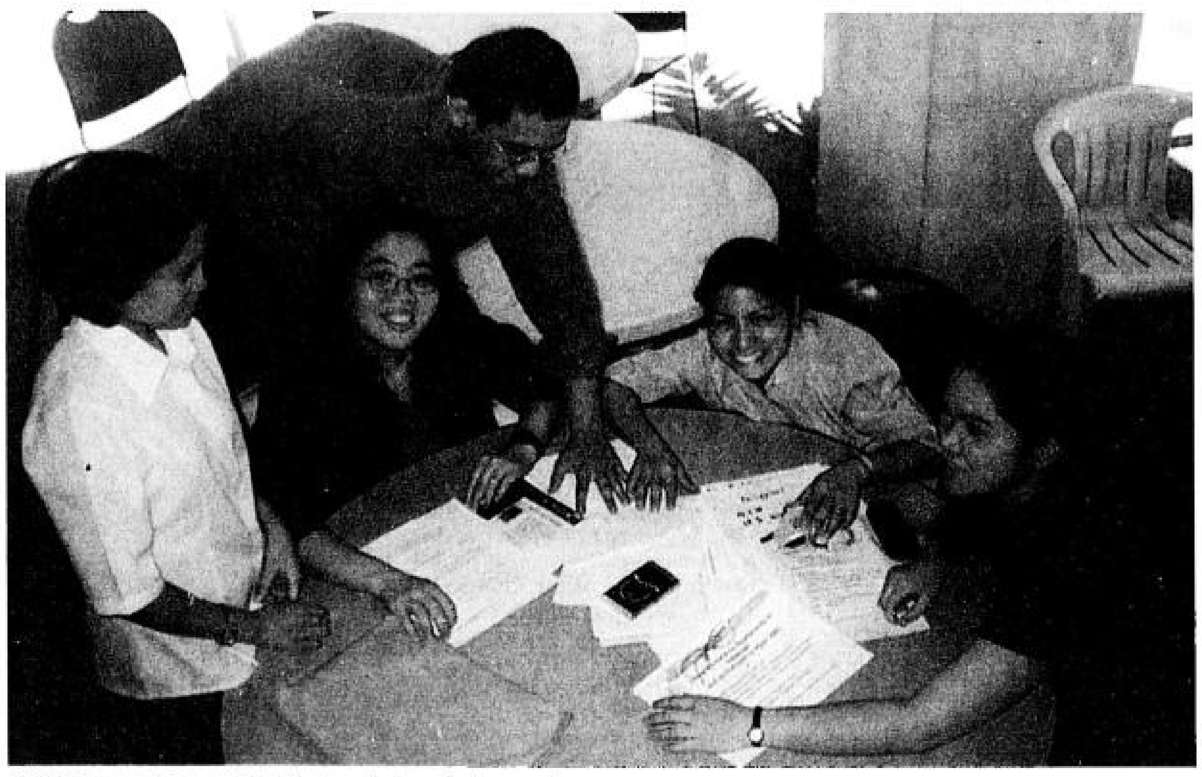
"They are confused between short-term and long-term benefits," Cunanan observes. "Their perception of 'who did something good for the country' is actually 'who helped me when I was in need.'"

Empowerment

Agulo believes that people still have a long way to go in terms of political maturity.

"What is lacking is the consciousness in most Filipino voters about the power that resides in them, the awareness that they can demand efficient services from their leaders because they voted for them," she says.

Working as professionals on weekdays and doing advocacy work on weekends does not leave the group much time for rest.


MOVE members use their lunch break to meet.

"But whatever I experience here (in MoVE) compensates for what I lose," Agulo says.

MoVE had to go through trying and disheartening situations. Once, only two people attended an orientation meeting. There was a time, too, when they had to borrow money from one of their professors so they could hold another session.

Asked whether the Filipino will vote differently in the light of recent political developments, Agulo says: "If I don't have any hope or faith, I won't be doing this. I know there is still a potential for change."

Group urges Ombudsman to resolve Binay cases

By Michael Lim Ubac

DISMISSED employees of the Makati Action Center (MAC) are up in arms over the failure of the Office of the Ombudsman to act on the complaints of graft and malversation of public funds they filed against Makati Mayor Elenita S. Binay and her husband Jejomar Binay, former Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair.

The charges were filed as early as 1999 in connection with the P100 million in unremitted contributions of the dismissed employees to the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Medicare, Pag-Ibig and the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Representatives of about 4,000 dismissed MAC employees denounced Overall Ombudsman Margarito P. Gervacio Jr. for his supposed failure to resolve the cases within a reasonable time frame.

"The Ombudsman should come out with a resolution," Rene Bondal, counsel for the complainants, said in a news conference in Manila yesterday morning. "It should resolve the cases immediately so that we will know what to do."

Bondal said he was simply asking the Ombudsman to act on the cases. "Whether these cases will be dismissed or filed with the Sandiganbayan is beside the point," he said.

"The Ombudsman should resolve the cases so that we could appeal its decision with the Court of Appeals should it decide to rule against us," he added. "But how can we do that with its questionable silence on the cases?"

Dionisio Matuguina said Gervacio vowed to resolve the cases as early as two months ago. "But it has been two months already after that meeting," he said.

Matuguina said his fellow ex-employees of MAC decided to lodge criminal and administrative charges against the Binays and four other city officials after they were dismissed in September 1998.

"After we were dismissed, we found out that we could not avail (ourselves) of any government benefits since the respondents did not remit our contributions, which were automatically deducted from our salaries every month," he said.

He showed the Inquirer documents to prove that the city government had been deducting from the complainants monthly contributions to GSIS, Pag-Ibig and Medicare until their services were terminated.

He said many of the dismissed employees had served the city government since 1990 or 1992. "We were all treated as casual employees for that length of time," he said. "We could not even apply for a loan since they did not remit our contributions."

They alleged that they were also illegally terminated.

Matuguinas said Jejomar, as former Makati mayor, and his successor, his wife Elenita, approved to extend their appointments from July 1 to December 2000.

But the city government, upon the approval of Mayor Elenita Binay, sacked them in September 1998 purportedly as part of the city's cost-cutting measures.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, March 29, 2001

1st Reading: Ex 32:7-14
Gospel: Jn 5:31-47

Jesus said to the Jews, "If I bore witness to myself, my testimony would be worthless. But Another One is bearing witness to me and I know that his testimony is true when he bears witness to me. John also bore witness to the truth when you sent messengers to him, but I do not seek such human testimony; I recall this for you, so that you may be saved.

John was a burning and shining lamp, and for a while you were willing to enjoy his light. But I have greater evidence than that of John – the works which the *Father* entrusted to me to carry out. The very works I do bear witness: the *Father* has sent me. Thus he who bears witness to me is the *Father* who sent me. You have never heard his voice and have never seen his likeness; then, as long as you do not believe his messenger, his word is not in you.

You search in the Scriptures thinking that in them you will find life; yet Scripture bears witness to me. But you refuse to come to me, that you may live. I am not seeking human praise; but I have known that love of God is not within you, for I have come in my *Father's* name and you do not accept me. If another comes in his own name, you will accept him. As long as you seek praise from one another instead of seeking the glory coming from the only God, how can you believe?

Do not think that I shall accuse you to the *Father*. Moses himself in whom you placed your hope, accuses you. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

Commentary

The Fourth Evangelist asserts Jesus to be the one truly sent by God. More than the required two witnesses attest to this: John the Baptist, Jesus' humanizing deeds, the Scriptures. Yet all the solemnity of these testimonies could not convince diffident hearts. Yes, only when God's love is in us, when we love Jesus, can we believe in him. When are we able to believe someone is capable of anything if not because we love him or her? It is our love that transforms the meaning of his/her words or deeds. Love, so that you can believe and by believing you can love more.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Treachery— For treachery to be appreciated, two essential elements must concur; (1) the employment of means of execution that gives the person attacked no opportunity to defend himself or to retaliate: and (2) the said means of execution was deliberately or consciously adopted. What is decisive is that the execution of the attack made it impossible for the victim to defend himself or retaliate. In this case, there is no clear showing that the victim could not defend himself when he was attacked. The fact that the attacker used a bladed weapon did not *per se* make the attack treacherous. Treachery must be proved by clear and convincing evidence or as conclusively as the killing itself. Any doubt as to the existence of treachery must be resolved in favor of the accused. Absent clear and convincing proof of treachery, appellant can only be convicted of homicide. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Quisumbing, *En Banc*, People v. Hilot, G.R. No. 129532, October 5, 2000]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

METRO CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Munti students to use uniforms in graduation

IN RESPONSE to a memorandum issued by Education Secretary Raul Roco on keeping graduation rites simple, the Division of City Schools of Muntinlupa, after a consultation with teachers and parents, decided to use school uniforms instead of togas in graduation ceremonies.

The city school division's Dr. Alma Bella Bautista said that as a result of the decision, the graduation fee in Muntinlupa will now be reduced to a maximum of only P150.

Bella held a general meeting with school principals, teachers and parents to discuss the holding of simple graduation rites.

The meeting's participants welcomed the development and thanked the school authorities for addressing the matter, she said.

Muntinlupa Mayor Jaime R. Fresnedi lauded the decision to keep the ceremonies simple. He said what is more important is that the students would receive their diplomas.

"This will help parents free themselves of additional expenses," he said.

The graduation schedules of the 17 public elementary and high schools in the city will run from March 30 to April 6. There are a total of 5,852 graduates in the elementary level and 3,100 in high school.

Bella said the ultimate purpose of holding graduation ceremonies is to give honor and importance to the students who have painstakingly completed their studies.

"But these graduation rites need not be expensive and should not burden the parents financially," she said. "It is enough to conduct it simply, with pride and honor."

Bong distributes cash assistance to 200 families

CAVITE Gov. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. on Monday distributed cash assistance to more than 200 families of dead veterans at the provincial capitol lobby in Trece Martires City.

Each family received P3,000 cash.

The money Revilla distributed was the first part of this year's P1.5 million in cash assistance for the families of dead veterans.

Revilla earlier signed a symbolic check for P1.5 million before guests, hundreds of veterans and families of dead veterans and others who joined the celebration of the 104th anniversary of the Tejeros Convention and the founding of the Philippine Army.

The celebration was held at the Casa Hacienda, the Tejeros Convention site in Rosario, Cavite on March 22.

Revilla and provincial social welfare and development officer Ruffy Gamad turned over the symbolic check to Gen. Gregorio Lim, president of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines,

In a speech, Revilla expressed his commitment to the advancement of the welfare of veterans and their families thorough various programs and projects, aside from cash assistance.

He pointed out that it was because of the courage and heroism of the veterans in fighting foreign colonizers that Filipinos enjoy freedom today.

ABANSE! Pinay nominees, officers and friends are joined by Sen. Loren Legarda (second from left, seated). Standing (from left) are nominees Annie Serrano, lawyer Alice Morada and Rep. Patricia Sarenas and Abanse! Pinay chair Narzalina Lim. Seated (from left) are Sunday Inquirer Magazine Associate Editor Penny Azarzon de la Cruz, Legarda, Abanse! Pinay president Rina Jimenez David and nominee Andrea Lizares.

Tamayo vs Villar in LP

POLITICAL observers are predicting a tight two-way contest between former Vice Mayor Tony Tamayo and Cynthia Villar over the lone congressional seat in Las Piñas City.

Tamayo, a businessman and civic leader, is counting on his strong ties with the youth, who comprise the majority of the city. He is also banking on the women's, religious and academe sectors.

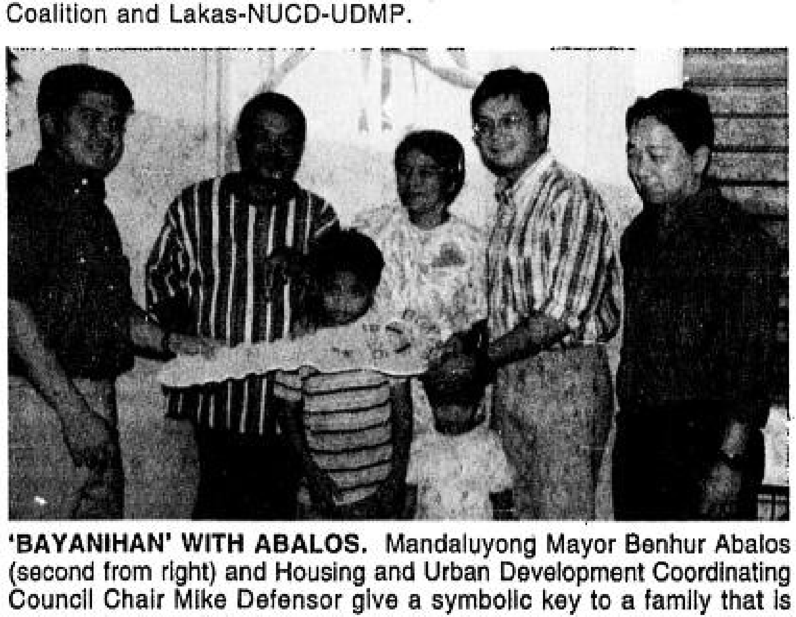
Tamayo has been serving the city's poor through the programs of the Jonelta Foundation, which he founded.

The group has helped thousands of students and currently gives out 300 scholarship grants to poor but deserving students. It has also provided many jobs to residents through its livelihood projects.

The Tamayo camp said Cynthia Villar is looking to strengthen her family's hold on Las Piñas. She is said to be banking on the political clout of her husband, senatorial candidate and former Speaker Manuel Villar, and the backing of her brother, incumbent Mayor Vergel Aguilar.

The Aguilars and the Tamayos have been traditional protagonists in the Las Piñas political arena since the Tamayos decided to challenge the political dominance of the Aguilars several years ago.

CALOOCAN
naldo Malonz
EGAY IS GMA'S GUY. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Caloocan City Mayor Rey Malonzo proclaim Caloocan Councilor and Sanggunlang Panlungsod majority floor leader Edgar Erice as the official candidate for 2nd district congressman of the People Power Coalition and Lakas-NUCD-UDMP.


'BAYANIHAN' WITH ABALOS. Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos (second from right) and Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council Chair Mike Defensor give a symbolic key to a family that is among the beneficiaries of the new medium-rise housing project in Barangay Barangka Drive. With them is Vice Mayor Jesse Cruz.

Pasay cops to receive legal aid

FREE legal assistance will be provided to policemen who will be involved in any case while in the performance of their duty.

This was the assurance given by Pasay city mayoral candidate Greg Alcera to the almost 400 members of the Pasay police force.

Alcera said his administration would create a five-man legal team to attend to the legal needs of policemen.

Although a policeman is presumed to be in lawful performance of his duty while discharging his functions, there is still a need for a defense counsel to prove this, Alcera said.

"Policeman should be assisted by a good lawyer in any legal battle," said Alcera, the incumbent vice mayor. He added that the salaries of the lawyers would come from the local government.

"Their main task is to defend all work-related cases of Pasay policemen," he said.

Alcera also promised to increase the P1,000 hazard pay of Pasay City policemen.

Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad earlier turned down a proposal to add P500 to the current hazard pay of Pasay policemen.

"We hope we can double it or even give them more," said Alcera.

He said his administration would also work for the inclusion among government scholars of at least one beneficiary of a Pasay policeman.

Beneficiaries will be entitled to free education at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasay until they finish college. The scholar's tuition fees and other expenses will be subsidized by the government.

"Through these simple ways, we hope to financially help our policemen, who are among the lowest paid government workers," said Alcera.

DrugWatch seeks help in crusade

THE DRUGWATCH party-list group called on fresh graduates to help in the government's campaign against drugs by keeping their noses clean and serving as good role models for younger students.

DrugWatch nominees Reynaldo Jaylo and Susan Ople noted a growing number of young people addicted to "shabu" have dropped out of school and resorted to a life of petty crime.

Jaylo and Ople believed that the number of drug users in the country might have reached the two-million mark.

"All government rehabilitation centers are full and some have even stopped admitting patients," the DrugWatch officials claimed.

In her speech before youth leaders in San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan, Ople urged fresh graduates to say no to drugs and resist pressure from their peers.

"Our government rehabilitation centers are teeming with young people whose future may have been destroyed by the drugs they took," Ople said.

The DrugWatch party-list officials urged government to create a special summer program to assign youth volunteers to various non-government organizations.

"A massive summer outreach program would expose our young people to charity work and grassroots realities," Ople said.

DrugWatch itself is looking for volunteers who would like to help in its anti-drugs education program.

Shabu-pushing QC policeman dismissed

By Dave M. Veridiano

A QUEZON City policeman was ordered dismissed from the service after police and National Bureau of Investigation agents caught him in the act of selling two kilos of the prohibited drug metamphetamine hydrochloride, also known as shabu.

Director Gen. Leandro Mendoza, Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, ordered the dismissal of PO1 Marlowe de Guzman and the filing of charges against him.

De Guzman, 27, a member of the Central Police District (CPD) mobile patrol unit in Galas, Quezon City, and Jesus Villanueva, 38, were arrested during the weekend in Tugatog, Malabon after De Guzman delivered the shabu to an NBI undercover man who posed as a buyer.

De Guzman introduced himself as Walter Sy when he negotiated the sale of the shabu. The buyer signaled his colleagues to pounce on the suspect after confirming that De Guzman was carrying the illegal substance.

Supt. Rodrigo de Gracia, PNP spokesman, said that De Guzman's arrest was the result of a well-coördinated effort between the Philippine National Police and the NBI to help rid the police organization of "misfits and undesirables."

"Such inter-agency coordination is made even stronger by the fact that the heads of both law enforcement agencies are both graduates of the Philippine Military Academy graduates and are known to have good a professional relationship with each other," De Gracia said, referring to Mendoza and NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

No bail was recommended for the temporary release of De Guzman and Villanueva after they were charged before the Malabon prosecutor's office for violation of Republic Act No. 6425.

The suspects are detained at the NBI jail.

Japanese nabbed at Naia for carrying toy guns with authentic bullets

CARRYING toy guns is not against the law—except when they are loaded with real bullets.

A young Japanese was arrested at dawn yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport for carrying two plastic toy guns and an assortment of live ammunition and gun parts.

Kenichi Otsubo, 27, was stopped from boarding his Northwest Airlines flight for Narita and was brought to the Pasay City prosecutor's office for inquest on charges of illegal possession of ammunition and gun parts.

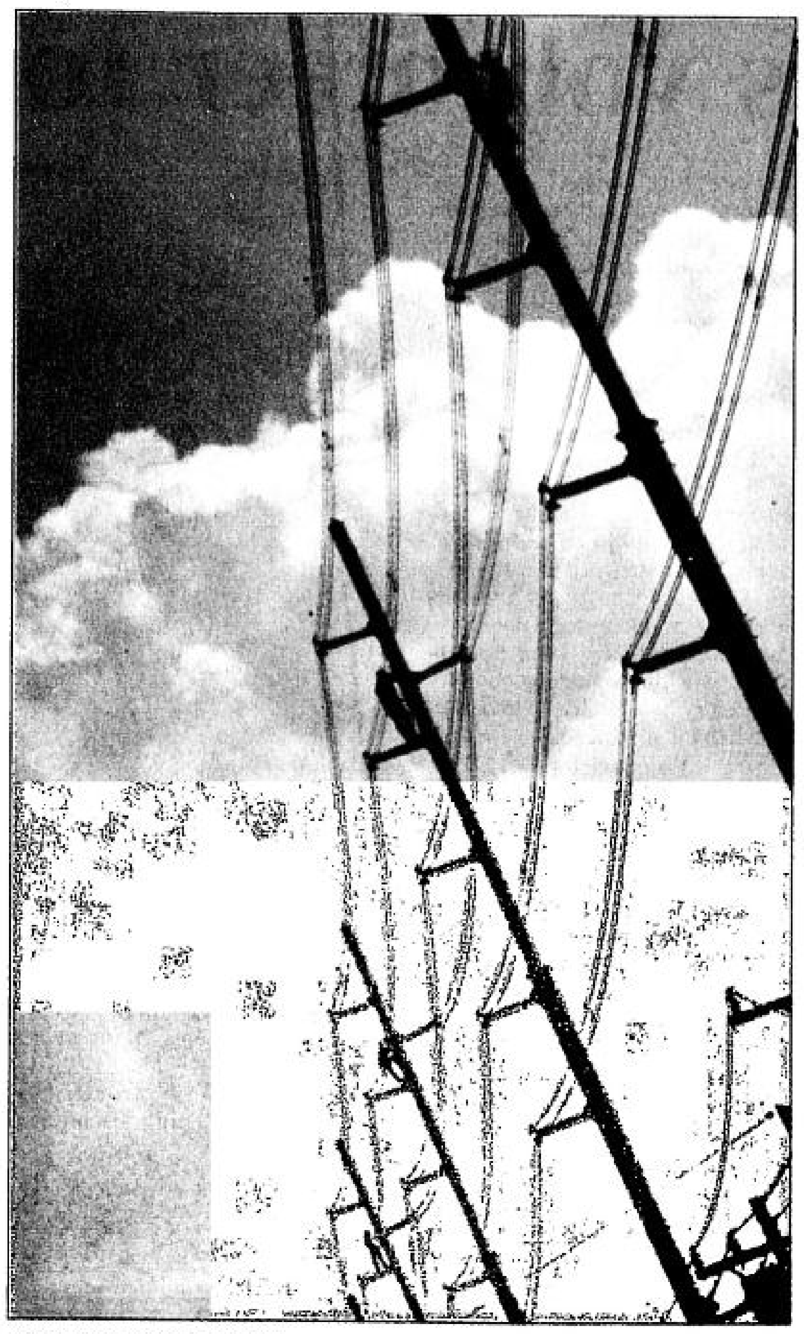
The Japanese denied owning the items, claiming that friends in Baguio City had given them to him as gifts. He gave his address in the Philippines as Filipino-Japanese Foundation of Northern Luzon Inc. at 3 Bukaneg St., Legarda Road, Baguio.

Otsubo was held shortly after he checked in at the Naia passenger terminal 1 at 4:45 a.m.

Police personnel manning the X-ray machine noticed guns in his fatigue duffel bag. Upon inspection of the bags, they found two toy guns resembling .45 cal. pistols, and 103 pieces of live ammunition for .45 cal. pistols and 50 pieces of live ammunition for .38 cal. pistols.

Also found in the bag were 111 tear gas canisters and gun parts.

TJ Burgonio



POWER OF LINES

Electric posts and cables set against the clouds never fail to catch the attention of photographers, like this scene of workers painting newly built posts along Edsa in Quezon City, which Inquirer's Edwin Bacasmas couldn't resist.

Friends of Intramuros to hold 'visita iglesia'

AN ORGANIZATION of business and cultural communities in historic Intramuros has strengthened its calendar of activities for the Holy Week and the rest of year.

GORDON

Robert Lane, president of the Friends of Intramuros (FOI), said the group members are encouraged by the attention given by Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon to the development of Intramuros as a heritage site in Manila.

"This has prompted us to go on a higher gear in carrying out our plans, including the 'visita iglesia' for the Holy Week," Lane said.

He noted that political will could channel youthful volunteerism in cleaning up the site. Intramuros is now free from unwanted garbage and graffiti, he said.

A statement jointly signed by Lane and FOI vice president Fr. Pedro G. Gallende OSA said they are "pleased with the energy and enthusiasm of Secretary Gordon and fully support his priorities in getting people, both local and foreign, to appreciate the positive aspects of our country."

"We feel Secretary Gordon is just what the department needs to get us into the mainstream of Southeast Asian tourism," the statement said.

The FOI was established to harness institutions and individuals seeking the preservation of the historical and cultural attributes of Intramuros.

Lane said details of the "visita iglesia" and the Way of the Cross would be announced soon and could also be obtained at the San Agustin Church bulletin board.

Consuelo D. Sison, FOI auditor and founding member, said she was amazed to see the streets of Intramuros so clean. "What I saw was more than what I expected," she said.

Sison recalled that one Sunday when she visited Intramuros, she saw "groups of tourists walking around the streets. I used to see tourists, but they were just a few."

She said she was delighted by the sight of one group being accompanied by a *rondalla*.

"I still hope, though, that one day, the private structures, including a restaurant, on top of the walls will disappear," she said.

Gordon earlier informed the FOI that the DOT, through the Intramuros Administration, would enhance the lighting, water supply, parking and security in Intramuros.

"There will be light and sound experiences not only for the tourists but also for our youth, to make them appreciate the richness of our history," he said.

"There will be a host of activities to choose from," he said. "There will be plays, cultural presentations, special events in the museums," he said.

Tourist-friendly signages and information centers will tell tourists where to go and what to do for what price, according to Gordon.

TV documentary to launch Veterans Week celebration

THE DEFENDERS of Bataan and Corregidor (DBC) and the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) have set the premier exhibition of the TV documentary "Takbo ng Buhay" for April 6, 2001 at 4 p.m. at the Bulwagang Arturo T. Enrile in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

The TV documentary ushers in the weeklong celebration of Veterans Week which starts on April 3.

The documentary features the four-day marathon of running priest Robert Reyes and his group of runners, composed of Bataan veterans, elements of the PNP, priests and youth. They will retrace the original route of the Death March from Mariveles to Capas in Tarlac.

The documentary includes interviews of survivors of the Death March, and the people of Bataan, Pampanga and Tarlac who witnessed the march. Footages of the reenactment by Joel Torre, Ronnie Lazaro and other actors will also be shown.

"Takbo ng Buhay" was directed by Butch Nolasco, whose previous documentary, "Jose Rizal: Ang Buhay ng Isang Bayani," won a CCP Award in 1997. Businessman James T. Litton is the executive producer. Military historian Dr. Ricardo T. Jose will do the on- and off-camera commentary. He also served as historical consultant.

For inquiries, please call Jewell Reyes, Rosalie Mendoza or Girlie Delgado at 912-1111.

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THREE for the noontime show. Rico Yan (left), Marvin Agustin (middle) and Dominic Ochoa exercise their gift of gab on national TV.

What a good showing by Whattamen

BY GOBLETH MOULIC
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—While the rest of the hosts of various noontime TV shows have resorted to slapstick comedy and rudeness to draw public attention, three young, seemingly squeaky-clean men are at least talking some sense.

And what a refreshing, significant change it is.

Rico Yan, Marvin Agustin and Dominic Ochoa—the newest addition to the two-year-old "Magandang Tanghali Bayan"—never had any inkling they would be âble to exercise their gift of gab on national TV six days a week.

In fact, the three buddies—more popularly known as "Whattamen," a name coined for them by the ABS-CBN Talent Center—were neck-deep with work in their individual careers when they received an urgent call from the ABS-CBN top brass one Friday afternoon.

Rico was doing the early evening soap "Saan Ka Man Naroroon" while maintaining his pearl shakes business, Orbitz.

Marvin was then shooting the movie "Dekada 70" with Vilma Santos. Dominic was fulfilling his own commitments.

The three of them were asked to sit down together with the staff of "Magandang Tanghali Bayan" not only to discuss their newfound job but also to devise plans on how to improve the show.

"I couldn't believe it," Rico recalled during a recent visit to Baguio City. "We were told the night before that we were going to be part of the show the following day. We were really caught by surprise. Of course, I welcomed the development. But never in my wildest dream did I expect to be hosting MTB along with my two friends."

"I am very open to new projects, new tasks like hosting," said Marvin, who was also in Baguio. "And I'm enjoying my job very well."

Dominic was in Cebu when the whole MTB staff and crew staged a show at Burhham Park earlier this month.

For the Whattamen boys, the biggest obstacle is when people inevitably compare them with Willie Revillame, who was kicked out of MTB.

Rico and Marvin were quick to say they were hired not to fill the shoes of Revillame but to cater to the youth, who comprise the big chunk of the TV-viewing population.

"We don't consider ourselves as mere replacements of Willie," said Marvin. "One reason ABS-CBN executives got us is that they wanted to target the young audience, the *bagets*."

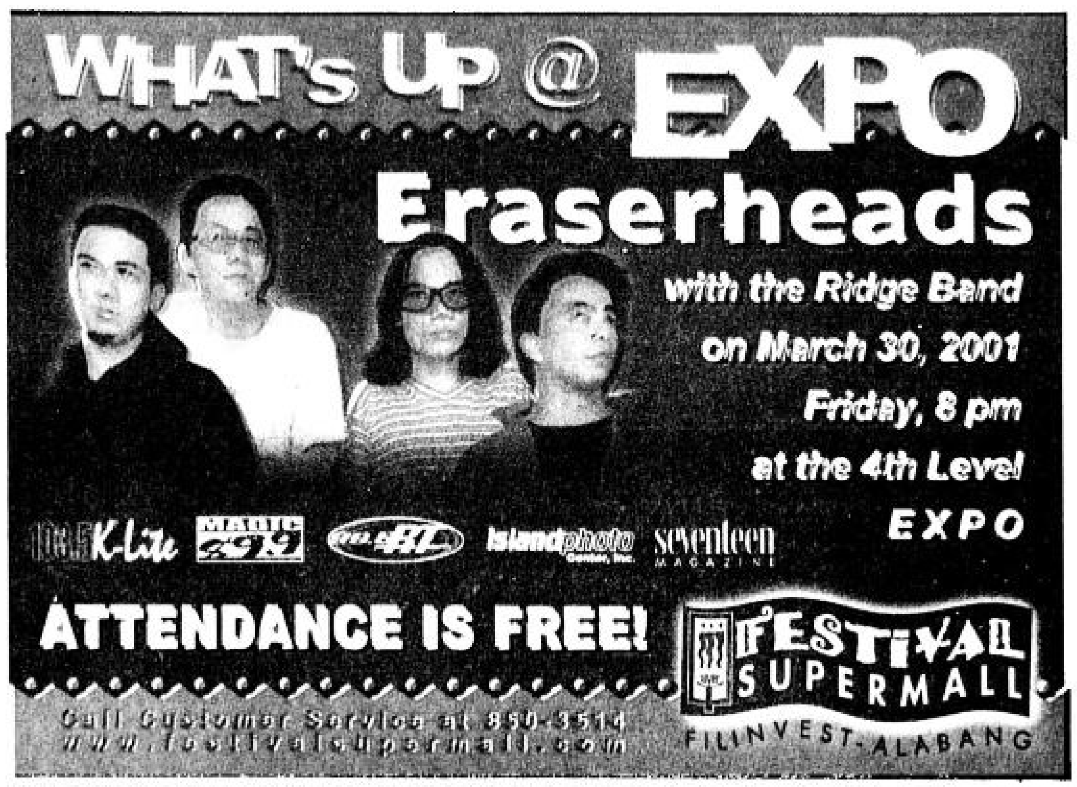
Rico said their advantage over other noontime shows is that he, Marvin and Dominic are the best of friends both on and off camera. This kind of chemistry, he said, is what people like to see on noontime TV.

"We go out together, we do things together," Rico said. "Our advantage lies in our friendship. The audience sees that in us."

Marvin added: "If you put together three guys who have not established rapport with one another, they would not gel and that would be very obvious on screen. Everything is transparent on television. There's no room for hypocrisy here."

Because they feel at ease in each

WHAT/A24



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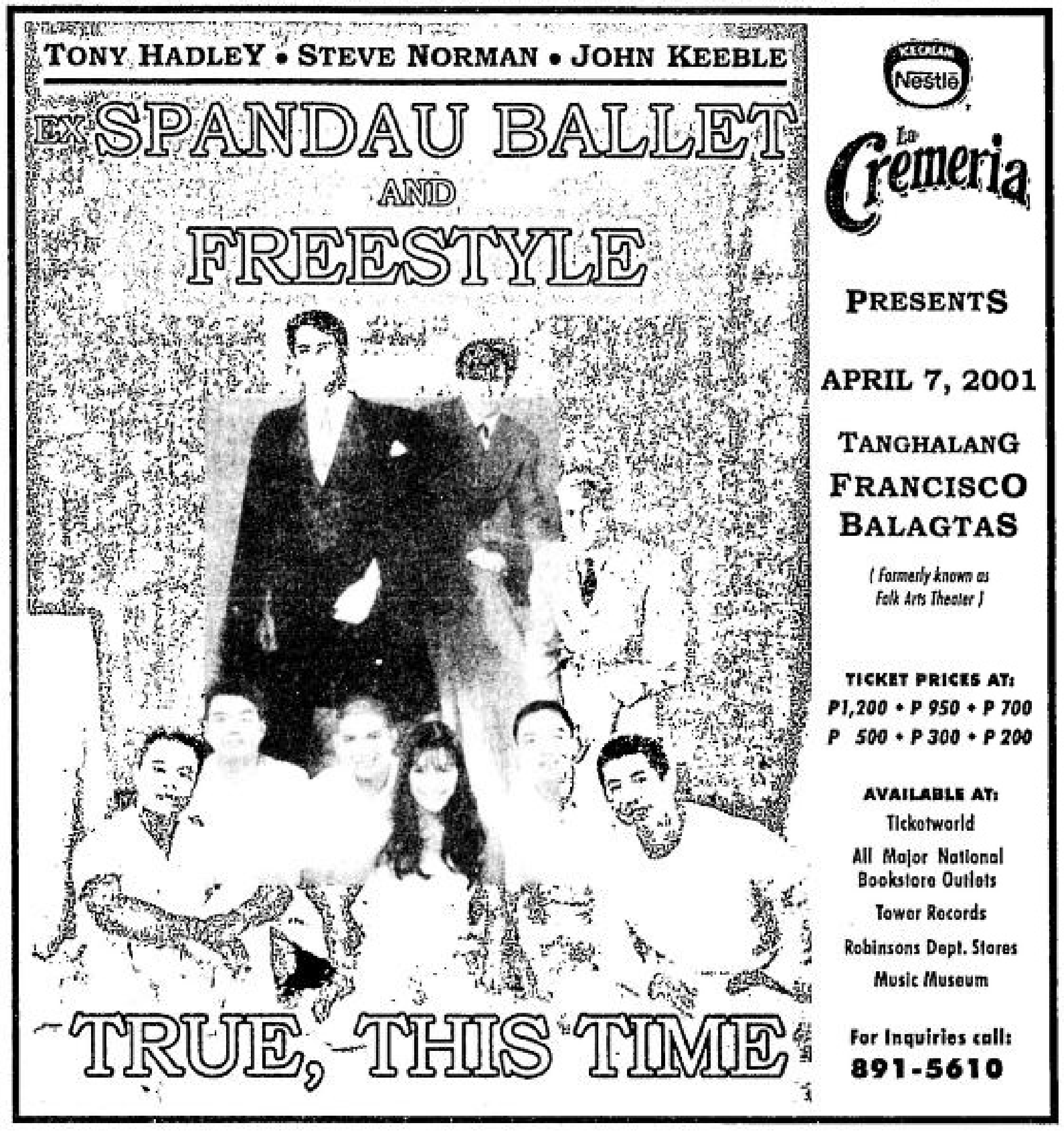

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10	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	UHAW SA INIT

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7	DOLBY DIGITAL	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
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9	DOLBY SURROUND	BABAENG PUTIK
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2	DOLBY DIGITAL	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
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12	DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

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5	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
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7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
9	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
10	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
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2	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BABAENG PUTIK
4	DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
5	DOLBY SURROUND	THE GIFT
6	DOLBY SURROUND	TOTAL AIKIDO
7	DTS	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	THEY NEST
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	QUILLS
10	DOLBY SURROUND	BAIT
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
12	DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER

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1	ULTRA SURROUND	BABAENG PUTIK
2	ULTRA SURROUND	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
3	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
4	ULTRA SURROUND	THEY NEST
5	ULTRA SURROUND	UHAW SA INIT
6	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
7	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CLOSED
9	ULTRA SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
10	ULTRA SURROUND	TOTAL AIKIDO

TUTUBAN CENTER 2514302

1	ULTRA SURROUND	THEY NEST
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BABAENG PUTIK

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2	ULTRA SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
3	ULTRA SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
4	ULTRA SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
5	ULTRA SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
6	ULTRA SURROUND	PURPLE STORM
7	DOLBY SURROUND	QUILLS

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2	ULTRA SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
3	ULTRA SURROUND	QUILLS
4	ULTRA SURROUND	DEMON GATE
5	ULTRA SURROUND	WAY OF THE GUN
6	ULTRA SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
7	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
8	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED

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1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	THE GIFT
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	BAIT
3	DOLBY SURROUND	TOTAL AIKIDO
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
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3 QUILLS
4 THE GIFT
5 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
6 BABAENG PUTIK
7 (DTS) BAIT
8 (SDDS) TOTAL AIKIDO
9 (DOLBY) SAVE THE LAST DANCE

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5
6

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8 OOPS TEKA LANG

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2 OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3 (DTS) SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
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4 SAVE THE LAST DANCE

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3 BABAENG PUTIK
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3 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
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2 OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3 WOMAN ON TOP
4 MS. CONGENIALITY

Berma
tel 879.2168

1 UHAW SA INIT
2 TOTAL AIKIDO

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(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

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3 BABAENG PUTIK
4 TOTAL AIKIDO

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2 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
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Ogie promoteiew album in the alls

P star Ogie Alcasid
ently won the Star
vards for best movie
me of the year for
ailangan Ko'y Ikaw,"
uge hit for his good
nd, Regine Velasquez,
m the blockbuster
vie of the same title.

The victory is a big
ost to Ogie's latest al-
m, "Movie Mo-
nts," which contains
own version of the
ng now enjoying mas-
e airplay in top FM
lio stations all over
country.

Ogie is busy pro-
ting "Movie Mo-
nts" in the malls. On
turday, March 31, he
es to SM Cebu and
Sunday, April 1, he
es to SM Megamall.

Ogie will render
ngs from the new al-
m which includes a
e minus one-karaoke
rsion of all the tracks,
every purchase of a
) or cassette.

Ogie will give away
ft items during the
unch, where there will
so be a sing-along
ntest.

Guesting in the
ows is former Intro-
ys lead singer Paco
espacochaga.

Ogie will be at SM
rview on April 6 and
M City North Edsa on
ril 8. Showtime is 4 p.m.

The "Movie Mo-
nts" mall tour is pre-
nted by MCA Uni-
rsal.

LCASID

What
good . . .

(rom page A23)

her's company, Rico,
arvin and Dominic
und themselves talk-
g at the same time
ring their first three
ys on MTB.

"Our first week was
disaster because all of
were talking simulta-
ously," Marvin said.
Ve can do that as
ends off camera but
at is a mortal sin in a
e show like 'MTB' as
e have to consider our
dience."

Their seasoned co-
osts, John Estrada,
andy Santiago, Rode-
ck Paulate, taught
em a valuable lesson
hosting: Listen while
hers are throwing
unchlines.

"You have to be re-
ly connected to each
her," Marvin said. "We
ould not upstage each
her. We should sup-
rt each other."

Marvin said he
uld be wacky. Rico
id he is doing his best
deliver his lines and
eas as clearly and as
fectively as possible.

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⑤ THE WEDDING PLANNER
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② UHAW SA INIT
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⑥ SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

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④ HANNIBAL
⑤ CHOCOLAT
⑥ THE CONTENDER

DOLBY dts SDDS

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	BABAENG PUTI
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	SAVE THE LAST DANC
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	WEDDING PLANNE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	OOPS TEKA LAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	THE GIF
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	TOTAL AIKID
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	TOTAL AIKID
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	UHAW SA IN
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATIO
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATIO
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	UHAW SA IN
MIRAMAR	IKAPITONG GLORIA/KAMASUTRA
ODEON	UHAW SA IN
ODEON-2	TOTAL AIKID
ROBEN	SA HULING PAGHIHINTA
TANDEM-1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLO
TANDEM-2	IKA - 7 GLORY
TIMES	HIGHLANDER / LOST SOL
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAN
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAK
ACT-3	CLOSE
ACT-4	CLOSE
CORONET-2	TOTAL AIKID
QUEZON-1	UHAW SA IN
REMAR	UHAW SA IN
REMAR-2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTA
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	BABAENG PUT
OCEAN CINEMA-A	PANABL
OCEAN CINEMA-B	CRISELD
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79/633-78-51 TO
CINEMA-1	BA
CINEMA-2	CHOCOLA
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 1
CINEMA-1	OOOPS, TEKA LAN
CINEMA-2	BABAENG PUT
CINEMA-3	UHAW SA IN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	QUILL
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	BA
CINEMA-6	PANABL
CINEMA-7	UHAW SA IN
CINEMA-8	MS. CONGENIALIT
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	THEY NES
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE GI
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SAVE THE LAST DANC
CINEMA-12	WEDDING PLANNE
CINEMA-14	TOTAL AIKID
CINEMA-15	SA HULING PAGHIHINTA
LORES	
CINEMA-2	RED PLAN
CINEMA-3	PROOF OF LI
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	ERIN BROKOVIC
CINEMA-2	CHOCOLA
CINEMA-3	CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGO
CINEMA-4	THEY NES
CINEMA-5	WEDDING PLANNE
CINEMA-6	SAVE THE LAST DANC

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Twin passions

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE TITLE of the film "Quills' refers to the writing instruments of the "infamous" **Marquis de Sade**, an apt focus for the movie. Initially, given the marquis' well-known proclivity for all activities sensual and sexual, we might think that the movie has a strong fixation on erotica. But it turns out that it is more concerned with the theme of artistic freedom.

This conjunction of sex and freedom makes the movie an especially "relevant" viewing experience for local moviegoers at this time, in the light of our own current controversy on this same combination of issues (the conflict between conservatives and liberals over "Live Show," etc.).

"Quills" puts the Marquis de Sade in an insane asylum but his being behind bars doesn't prevent him from writing a continuous series of erotic stories—and getting them published, in violation of official sanctions. He smuggles out his manuscript with the help of a young laundry girl (**Kate Winslet**).

She gets turned on by his stories but resists his attempts to deflower her. In charge of the asylum is a progressive young priest (**Joaquin Phoenix**) who tries to treat the inmates there kindly, but a cruel physician (Michael Caine) is sent to instill order and discipline.

He's a vicious doctor who practically tortures the inmates into mental health. Naturally, the marquis becomes the special target of his viciousness. Slowly but surely, he delimits the marquis' world, depriving him of quills, ink and paper to prevent him from writing more sexy stories.

This is where the film's point about the unquenchable passion for writing comes powerfully to the fore. To continue writing despite his having been deprived of the normal means to do so, the marquis first uses a bed sheet, then his own clothes, as parchment! As for quills and ink, he desperately comes up with alternatives for them, too.

Thus does the film vividly dramatize the artist's passion to practice his art, come what may. The movie regards the Marquis de Sade not as a pornographer, but as an artist whose metier happens to be erotic literature.

Even more tellingly, the film links the twin passions of art and sex, which writer **Doug Wright** and director **Philip Kaufman** see as conjoined expressions of the life force needed to transform our stay here on earth from mere existence to really living by being open to all of the possibilities that life has to offer.

Which is not to say that the movie is all that serious in dramatizing its theme. Quite a number of its scenes are funny, bawdy, outrageous—after all, we're in an insane asylum.

The twist here is that the so-called sane characters are sometimes even bigger dingbats than the asylum's spaced-out inmates! But that, too, is part of life's astounding ability to challenge, contradict and surprise.

So, see "Quills," by all means, but make sure you're viewing it for the right reasons—not for its sex and nudity, not for its "perversions," but to savor the sweet, "dangerous insanity" of erotic and artistic freedom.

Summer workshops

THE ABS-CBN Center for Communication Arts offers summer workshops in basic and advanced acting, voice, street dance, modern jazz, speech and public speaking, personality development, arts and crafts, TV production, commercial production and TV news production.

Some workshops start on April 16, while the rest begin on May 14. Call 416-9366.

The Gantimpala Theater Foundation is also offering workshops this summer. Course offerings include acting for TV, movies and commercials; basic acting, children's theater, ballet for adults and children, street jazz, ballroom dancing, singing, visual arts and taebo.

The workshops will be held at SM City Fairview (Celebration Hall 1, Storyland 3/F), SM City Bacoor (Unit 2070, 2/F) and De La Salle University, College of St. Benilde, Taft Ave., MM (Dance Studio, 2/F), from April 18 to May 27. Call 897-9986.

Boyet and Sandy finally a couple–in God's eyes

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

AFTER 22 years of being together, **Christopher de Leon** and **Sandy Andolong** exchanged "I dos" in a church wedding last Tuesday in Caleruega, Nasugbu, Batangas.

The couple's decision to get married at this stage in their relationship surprised a number of their friends in and out of show biz. But Boyet and Sandy explained they wanted to get the blessing of the church after they got married in civil rites in 1997.

It took them a long time to get a church wedding since Boyet still had to get the annulment of his marriage to superstar **Nora Aunor**. He filed for it in 1989 but got it only five years ago.

"It's funny because after 22 years, we're getting married," Boyet says. "Three years from now, we will celebrate our silver anniversary, so does that mean we have to get married again?"

The couple chose March 27 as their wedding date since it was actually on that day when they became sweethearts in 1979.

"That's the anniversary date that we're celebrating," Sandy says. "So when we thought about getting married, we decided it to be on that day, too."

Sandy remembers she was only 14 when she first saw Boyet on the big screen in his award-winning debut performance in **Lino Brocka**'s "Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang." The movie won for Boyet his first best actor trophy from the Famas in 1974.

"I remember my mom was one of the judges," Sandy says. "When I saw Boyet, I told my mom, 'Yan, yan ang panalunin mo.'"

Boyet, meanwhile, also recalls seeing Sandy on the cover of Expressweek in 1977.

"When I saw her, I said I wanted to meet her," he says.

That same year, they were introduced by the late **Ishmael Bernal** in the premiere of "Dodong Diamond."

They were never paired in any movie, but worked together in a number of films like **Mike de Leon**'s "Kakaba Kaba Ka Ba?" and **Eddie Romero**'s "Aguila." They also did "Ikaw ay Akin" and "American Adobo."

Like other couples, Boyet and Sandy have had problems in their relationship.

"The most difficult was when Boyet had a drug problem in the early '80s and I nearly gave him up," Sandy discloses.

"That time, I prayed to the Lord and told Him, 'If we are really meant for each other, do something. If not, help me get out of this.' A friend invited Boyet to join a Life in the Spirit seminar of their church. To me, that was the answer."

In 1988, the couple surrendered themselves to the Lord and allowed Him to be the center of their union. The following year, they joined the Oasis of Love Catholic Community.

Sandy has stuck to her man through thick and thin and Boyet appreciates her for that.

"I saw her sacrifice. When I was down and out and I had nothing, we were still together and we were happy. She loves me very much. She's strong-willed and she's a very good mother. She's a good cook, too," he says of his wife.

To date, the couple has become one of the most envied and enduring pairs in show biz. Perhaps it helped that Sandy has chosen to stay out of the limelight and allowed Boyet to shine.

"I was not ambitious in my acting career," Sandy says. "I'm happy to get good roles. I did not dream to become a superstar. One superstar in the family is enough."

Sandy considers Boyet's straightforwardness and honesty as his best qualities.

"He's also very demonstrative," she says. "When he loves you, he really shows it. He's also like that to our five kids."

The Boyet-Sandy wedding will be aired as a TV special dubbed as "Magpakailanman," Saturday, March 30, 9-11 p.m. on GMA 7.

DE LAS ALAS. Returns to the Music Museum stage

Boyet points out the two-hour show will not just be the TV coverage of their wedding, but will also be a semi-documentary about their life as a couple. It will also feature interviews with their immediate family members and friends.

"We hope our story will inspire other couples," the actor says.

Unlike most show-biz weddings, Boyet and Sandy managed to keep theirs as a very private affair, with only 120 invited guests. Even the principal sponsors were limited to only two pairs—businessman **Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco**, former movie producer **Marichu Vera-Perez Maceda**, action king **Fernando Poe Jr.** and **Felice Avila** (Sandy's "favorite aunt").

The bride wore a **Lya Armovit** gown, while the groom donned a tux by **Jun-Jun Cambe**.

The couple's children made up the entourage. **Ian**, Boyet's 25-year-old son with Nora Aunor, was the best man. Flower girls were their two daughters—**Maria Angelica**, 7 and **Micaela**, 4.

Gabriel was ring bearer, **Miguel** was coin bearer and **Rafael** was Bible bearer.

The ceremony was officiated by Fr. **Sonny Ramirez** and Fr. **Jun Lingad**.

ALTHOUGH living together for 22 years, Christopher de Leon and Sandy Andolong finally get Church blessing on their union.

Sold-out nights

AFTER the sold-out nights of her first series, **Ai-Ai de las Alas** returns to the Music Museum for more of her stand-up comedy act, "PP2," this time titled "Campaign Me."

Ai-Ai could not believe that the audience clamored for more on the second night of her performance last month.

"*Ang alam ko sa* concert *lang nagmo*-more," she says. "That's why we didn't know what to do when the audience started shouting. We just repeated a song number to give in to them."

For three consecutive years, Ai-Ai held sold-out birthday concerts at the Folk Arts Theater—"Respect Me," "Seduct Me" and "Abuse Me."

For the additional nights of "PP2: Campaign Me" on March 30 and 31, also at the Music Museum, she has put more spice into her characterizations.

She and her guests **Philip Lazaro, Ate Gay, Arnel Tamayo** and **Vivora** will keep the audience in stitches with their comic impersonations of prominent characters like Bibing Arina, Maarnie Menriquez, Dra. Borloloy, Tita Cory Anino, Teysie Anino-Cometa, Delia Rashes and a lot more.

The Whiplash Dancers will join the team in a few dance numbers.

The brain behind "PP2" is director **Floy Quintos**, who also conceptualized the successful "Rock da Vote" series in the '90s.

Former recording artist sings song of politics

BY ALLAN A. NAWAL
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DIGOS CITY—What's the difference between celebrities running for public office and politicians entertaining audiences to draw attention?

"A lot," says former recording artist Zander Khan, a candidate for mayor in Jose Abad Santos town.

Khan, Alex Wangkay in real life, said celebrities or former celebrities can concentrate on presenting their platform of government because they do not need to please their audience by trying so hard to become dancers or singers.

"Of course that could be construed as a joke but it's true," Khan said.

Khan, 43, who achieved a certain measure of fame in the early '80s through his hit song, "Tanging Ikaw," said that as early as 1998, he was already planning to run for public office, as he was being prodded by his friend Emmanuel Piñol, now North Cotabato governor.

"I was then to run under Lakas in the 2nd congressional seat but my wife was very opposed to it because she knew it would be very hard for a non-politician like me to fight seasoned politicians," Khan said.

His wife, Japanese physician Takahashi Fusako, 29, is more knowledgeable about politics than he is because some of her relatives are in the Japanese Diet (parliament), Khan said.

He said he heeded his wife's advice and concentrated on his business of importing automotive surplus and promoting potential boxing champions.

Among the boxers he handled were Gerry Peñalosa and Prince Gadi, currently ranked number one in the junior bantamweight division.

For three years, Khan said, he regularly visited his hometown and became more convinced of the need for change.

"All these years, there is little or no visible development in my town and the people there have become poorer even with the great potentials of the place," he said.

Khan said farmers find it difficult to bring their products to the market because of lack of infrastructure.

"One has to endure a motorboat ride amid frightening waves for six hours before reaching the market center where they could get favorable prices for their products," he said. "No one can get a fair price in an area where the main businesses, from buy and sell to 5-6 (usurious lending), are manipulated by the people in power."

The lone road connecting Jose Abad Santos to Don Marcelino town has remained unfinished, making it dangerous for travelers. Instead of risking their lives on the road, people of Jose Abad Santos would rather brave the waves.

"Most of the finished projects our people see are the houses of politicians in our town," Khan said.

The former recording artist is pitted against Ester Sioco of the Lachica clan who has been in political control of the town politics for more than two decades now. Sioco's running mate under the Nationalist People's Coalition is her younger brother Joel Lachica.

Wolfgang caps 'Acoustica' tour

FRESH from their successful "Acoustica" concert at the Music Museum, Manila's best rock band Wolfgang caps their bar tour this month with a performance tonight at Watering Hole in Ortigas Center, Pasig.

The group always had an SRO crowd during the first leg of their tour which covered top bars such as Padi's Point in Araneta, Jekyll and Hyde, Galo's and Studio 1.

Catch Basti, Mon, Manuel, Wolf and guest guitarist David Aguirre once more as they perform their original music and favorite tunes in acoustic style.

The show is Wolfgang's farewell performance before they leave next month for a special concert tour in the US.

Wolfgang's "Acoustica" bar tour is presented by Red Horse Beer and Eventscape Manila.

For inquiries, call 561-7606.

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Language: Italian w/ English subtitles

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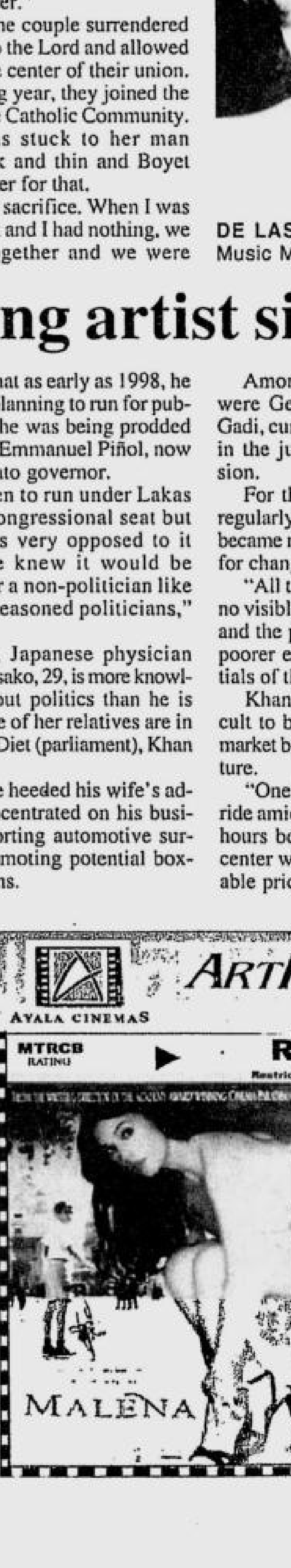

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THEY NEST - P 13 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	WEDDING PLANNER - P 13 12:30, 2:55, 5:20, 7:45, 10:10	SAVE THE LAST DANCE - P 13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

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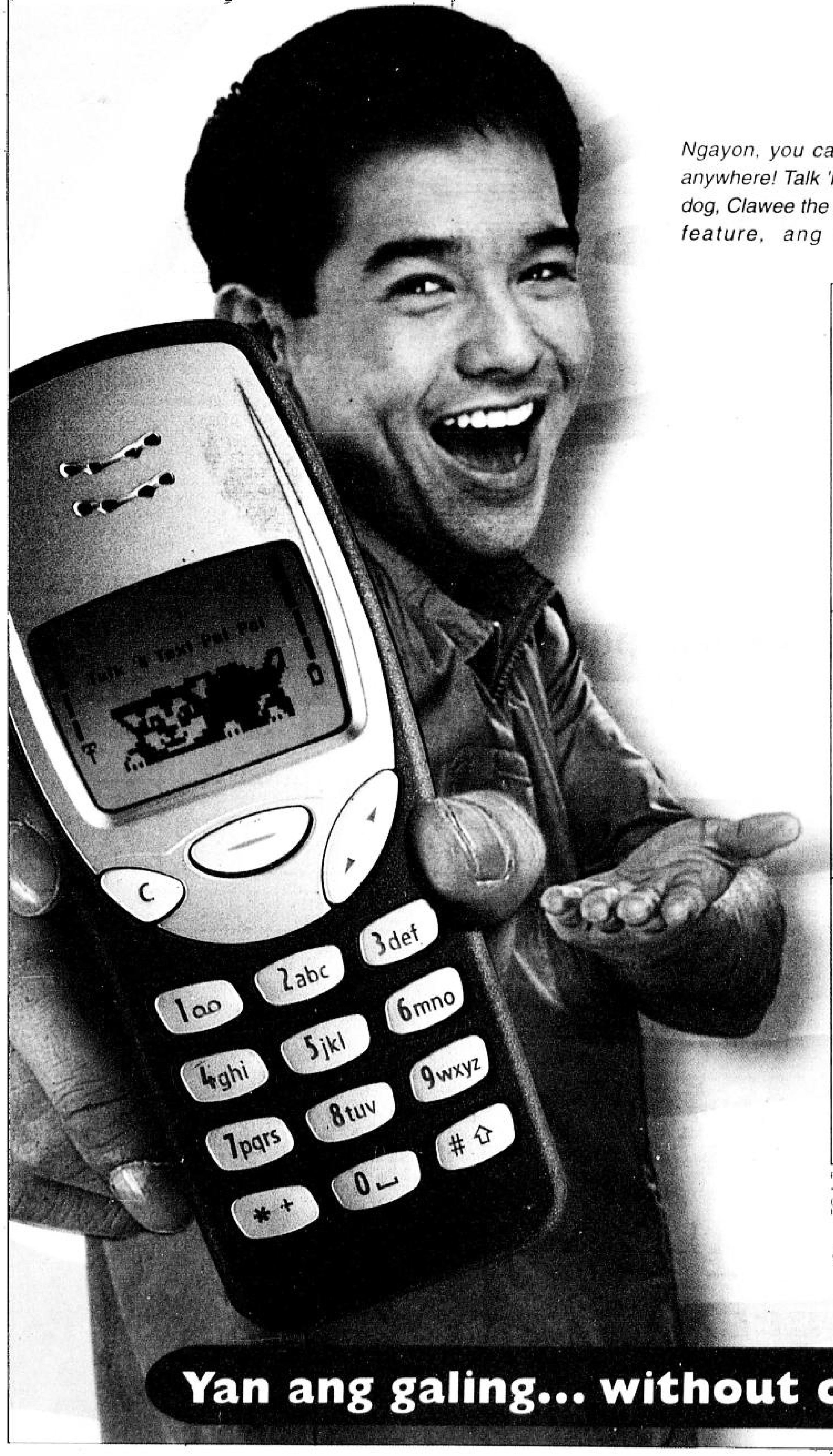

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PET HEALTH

Type PET HEALTH and send to 233. You'll receive a text message informing you of your pet's health.

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VIEWPET <Pet number>

Type VIEWPET <pet number> and send to 255*.
You can get your pet's number by first checking your pet's health.

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PET DRINK <WATER>
or <JUICE>
PET SLEEP
PET PLAY
PET BATHE
PET HUG
PET CURE
PET HEALTH
VIEWPET <PET NUMBER>

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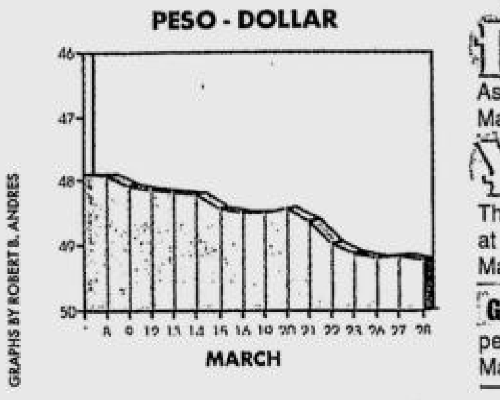

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱49.215 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 28, 2001

¥122.14 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 122.14 as of 5 p.m., March 28, 2001

GOLD:$261.50/262.00
per ounce Hong Kong, March 28, 2001

STOCK MARKET

Shares rise 0.3%

SHARE prices rose 0.3 percent yesterday in a knee-jerk reaction to an upturn in US markets, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index added 4.56 points to close at 1,451.55.

"It's in reaction to the US market but we are not improving as much as there's no catalyst on the domestic front," said Enrique Sta. Ana of Vickers Ballas Securities Inc.

"We are still not on the radar screen of most foreign funds," he added.

"The market's up in direct reaction to Wall Street but most investors are on the sidelines ahead of the Easter holidays," said Manny Cruz of Orion-Squire Capital Inc. *AFP*

(See stock market report on Page B2)

Intel to shift chip production from Latin America to RP

By GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

INTEL Corp., the world's biggest chip maker, is shifting part of its production of Pentium 4 processor chips from Latin America to the Philippines, the latest in a growing trend of giant computer parts makers to relocate their operations.

Board of Investments Managing Head Vincent Perez said that while no additional investments would be made in its Philippine plant and its Latin American operations would continue running, Intel found it more cost-competitive to produce its P4 chips here at its plant in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

The move is apparently driven by Intel's efforts to cut production costs in view of the US economic slowdown, which has severely affected demand for personal computers and spread to networking, communications and server. Intel has likewise stepped up the production of P4 chips, which offer better margins compared to its predecessor, the P3.

Intel CEO Craig Barrett visited the country last year and expressed his company's enduring faith in the country amid the bomb scare and burgeoning political crisis. Barrett said the Philippines would continue to be an important part of Intel's network of manufacturing operations in the country although he did not mention any specific plans.

The giant chipmaker, through its local subsidiary Intel Philippines Manufacturing Corp., is one of the biggest foreign investors in the country with total investments of nearly $1 billion since 1974.

Perez said Intel's relocation illustrated the windows of opportunity available to the Philippines arising from the economic slowdown in the US and Japan.

He noted that Japan computer giant Toshiba has closed down its US factory to relocate its production of laptops to the Philippines to take advantage of the high-quality, low-cost labor in the country.

Fujitsu Corp., the world's largest computer maker, is also considering expanding its Philippine hard disk drive factory in Laguna in line with its goal of developing it as its biggest information storage manufacturing facility in the region.

This has further bolstered the Philippines' status as the hub of hard disk drive manufacturing in the region. Japanese disk drive makers with factories in the Philippines are Toshiba, NEC Technologies and Hitachi Computer Products Corp.

US slowdown, internal weaknesses hound Asia

SINGAPORE—Waning domestic demand, feeble financial systems and low asset values will aggravate the impact of the US-led global economic slowdown on Asian economies, ABN-AMRO said yesterday.

The languishing US and Japanese economies, the twin engines for Asian growth, are seen as the major downside risks for the region. However, growth prospects are also threatened by internal factors, the Dutch-based international bank said in a report.

"Asia's problems are not purely external. Most countries are still affected by weak financial systems, asset deflation and insufficient domestic demand," the bank's re-

US/ B3

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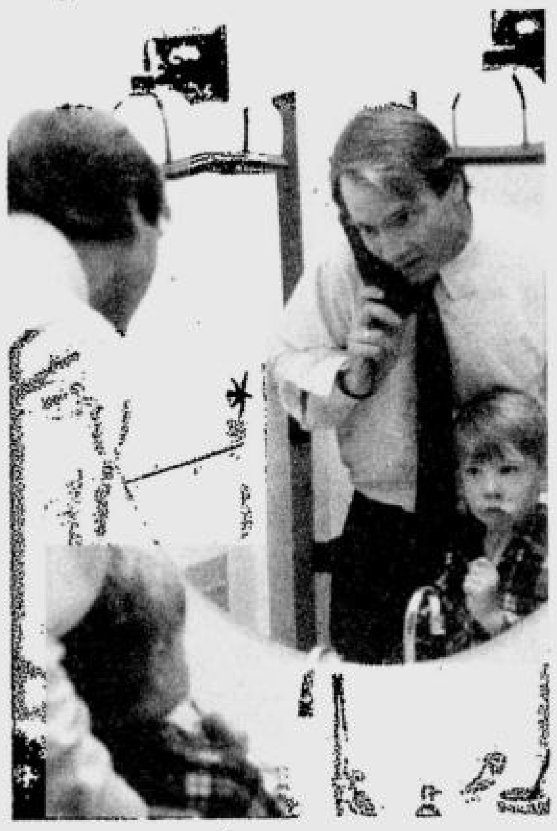

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Review to a kill

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

TO DECIDE what was its most pressing problem, this cute administration of Gloriaetta simply asked around. Unconciously, it gave all its attention to big business, plus of course its other backers like the IMF and the ADB. Thus it settled on the budget deficit.

Indeed, it is a bit enlarged. As all you guys know, anything that enlarges, such as, like, say, when you watch the porno "Live Show," can become a hot issue. Some people are likely to invoke the spiritual and moral teachings of my spinster aunt.

Hypocrisy aside, anyway, the enlarged budget deficit is such a serious problem that this cute administration is prepared to take the necessary steps. No, the Palace is not imposing a ban on the budget deficit! This is not the position of Jaime Cardinal Sin.

In a move which, perhaps even years from now, many will judge as the single most crucial act of this cute administration, a major breakthrough, if you will, the Palace just announced that it would conduct urgently a . . . well, "review."

And they say this cute administration does not have a single word on a single page of what can pass for an economic program. There, father, our government just disclosed a freaking "review!" What else do you want?

* * *

THAT earthshaking review will cover the whole system of taxation. In our country, you see, contrary to what people in other countries believe, tax is never really as certain as death. Thus every administration is willing to kill for a review.

The theory here seems to be that the government deserves all the money it can get from us, dead or alive. The review is useful, since it can say how the government can get more of our money. It can answer the question, "what seems to be wrong?"

Oh, nothing much, sir, madam! Nothing is really wrong with the system. It's just that, maybe, a lot is wrong with the people who are running it. They are a little bit on the corrupt side of public service.

Don't get me wrong. Any review is always useful. In the review of taxation, for instance, our dear government is only likely going to recycle some old position papers written by big groups with big interests to protect. You know—that kind of useful.

* * *

SO we are supposed to jump for economic joy, now that this cute administration finally made a death-defying decision. Thank heavens, only the tax system is flawed. Before, the entire economy was the whole problem. At least we already solved that one.

Miraculously, our government already turned around the economy from being "tattered" to just shrinking. It also took some painful steps. For instance, it made another major, ahh, "review" of the economic program of the man named Band . . . Wrist Band.

In that review of the Wrist Band program, this cute administration also went against all odds by doing another major "update." The review was meant to update a medium-term program which was devised only in 1998. It's not even halfway through.

Apparently, economic programs are as fast to get out of style as women's shoes. Look, papa, my shoes are already two-thirds of a second old! In shoe years, an economic program midway into its life is considered a museum piece.

* * *

REVIEW is also the latest news from our dear National Telecommunications Commission, or NTC. This agency supposedly watches out for us, like when cell phone companies are giving it to us a la Live Show. You know—something immoral.

In keeping with the derringdo of the national leadership, the NTC just announced some bold measures of its own. It is doing something about all those immoral, objectionable, evil text messages which you get on the cell phone.

Of course, the NTC also would like to thank the cell phone companies for their full cooperation and wholehearted support, without which it would have been impossible for the NTC to accomplish this most stupid plan I have ever heard in my entire life.

* * *

IT works this way. When you get an evil message, according to the NTC guidelines, you have to take your cell phone to the NTC—physically! It's the only thing the NTC needs to give you its brand of justice. It's such an undeniable proof!

For that's when the NTC can punish the evildoer by writing to him or her or it a letter. In no uncertain terms does the NTC warn the evildoer. After issuing three warnings, and the perpetrator does not reform, then the NTC just about has it!

In a punishment to end all punishments, which the NTC can only impose with the full cooperation and wholehearted support of cell phone companies, which the NTC is supposed to watch out for, the NTC is going to block the perpetrator's "SIM card."

There you have it, Ms. Petite, your bright NTC is spending our taxes by doing everything it can to solve the problem of evil text messages but nothing about lousy cell phone service. Just how impossible is it to acquire a new freaking SIM card, anyway?

* * *

IN case you are too jaded to care, somebody put up a big political billboard by the Pasig River near the Guadalupe Bridge in Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines, with telephone numbers . . . no, not that, where was I?

Okay, about the billboard, it indicates that the campaign headquarters of the handsome politician is somewhere there in the vicinity of the billboard, give or take a few hundred meters. It's like the billboard's saying there's one McDo just 50 meters away!

It's not that politicos are on same level as hamburgers in the heirarchy of health food. It's just that, uh, what one does in politics! Do you really need a billboard to announce that you have your headquarters only several hundred meters away?

Understandably, this is the same politico who married an actress who was way past her prime, and then ran for public office using the name of the actress as his alias, and he even won.

He is the same politico who pledged undying support to the former administration of Wrist Band, thereby getting all sorts of budget releases for his and his wife's projects, if any, and then unceremoniously doing a *balimbing* late in the impeachment game.

I mean, really, I don't know how you can trust such a wonderful guy.

Local Coke unit to acquire Sugarland for ₱6.9B

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. has forged a P6.9-billion deal to spin off its non-alcoholic businesses, including Sugarland Beverage Corp., into newly reacquired soft drink subsidiary Coca Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc.

In a statement yesterday, SMC announced that it would acquire jointly with Coca Cola Co. of Atlanta the water and juice brands of La Tondeña Distillers Inc. and transfer them to CCBPI, which is 65 percent owned by the local conglomerate and 35 percent by Coke Atlanta.

The definitive agreement to consolidate these non-alcoholic businesses, which aims to give the SMC group better operational focus, has already been signed by SMC, Coke Atlanta and LTDI.

"We recognize that the competitive landscape in the water and juice segments is likely to change significantly in the next few years and we intend to maintain our leading position in those businesses," SMC chair and CEO Eduardo M. Cojuangco Jr. said.

"By aligning our non-liquor interests, we will be well-positioned to capture the industry's growth prospects. By associating our water and juice brands with Coca Cola, one of the world's most recognized brand names and a company which is also aggressively growing its non-carbonated beverage portfolio, we will face the market as a more capable, stronger player than we are today," Cojuangco said.

Industry sources said the long-term plan was to build up Sugarland as a separate beverage subsidiary and by folding it into CCBPI, it has thus taken Coke Atlanta as a strategic partner in SMC's non-alcoholic businesses. This answers the question as to what role Coke Atlanta will play after the global soft drink maker helped SMC's bid to regain control of CCBPI from Coca Cola Amatil Ltd. of Australia.

The deal will also serve as a litmus test to the synergy between SMC and Coke Atlanta in handling the beverage business for bigger ventures in the future.

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TEL. NO. 818-4355, 892-7806

SYNOPSIS OF ANNUAL STATEMENT

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1999

ADMITTED ASSETS:		
TREASURY BILLS		P 24,557,000 00
STOCKS		16,735,715.30
REAL ESTATE		100,426 15
MORTGAGE LOANS		400,000 00
OTHER LOANS		172,790 46
SECURITY FUND		36,873 00
CASH IN OFFICE AND IN BANKS		20,718,348 05
PREMIUMS RECEIVABLE		29,584,985 74
DUE FROM CEDING COMPANIES		27,785,401 31
FUNDS HELD BY CEDING COMPANIES		719,897 69
LOSS RESERVE WITHHELD BY CEDING COMPANIES		131,375 85
REINSURANCE RECOVERABLE		58,195,853 48
ACCRUED INVESTMENT INCOME		54,103.71
ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINE		510,711 33
TOTAL ADMITTED ASSETS		P 179,703,482 07
LIABILITIES:		
LOSSES AND CLAIMS PAYABLE		P 29,560,080 87
LOSS ADJUSTMENT EXPENSES PAYABLE		1,173,149 95
RESERVE FOR UNEARNED PREMIUMS		17,322,460.72
CATASTROPHE LOSS RESERVE		165,453 26
COMMISSION PAYABLE		5,897,902 64
PREMIUMS DUE TO REINSURERS		34,424,627 29
FUNDS HELD FOR REINSURERS		5,398,358 83
TAXES PAYABLE		14,130,946 23
UNEARNED BOND DISCOUNT		540,149 69
OTHER LIABILITIES		2,824,787 85
TOTAL LIABILITIES		P 111,437,917.33
STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		
CAPITAL STOCK PAID-UP	P 62,500,000 00	
CONTRIBUTED SURPLUS	500,000 00	
FLUCTUATION RESERVE-STOCKS	1,962,869.75	
RETAINED EARNINGS	3,302,694.99	
TOTAL STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		68,265,564.74
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		P 179,703,482 07

(This Synopsis, prepared from the 1999 Annual Statement, approved by the Insurance Commissioner, is published pursuant to Section 225 of the Insurance Code of 1978, as amended.)

CURRENCIES

Mar. 28, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.118944	1.000000	49.1200
Japan	Yen	0.009159	0.008185	0.4020
United Kingdom	Pound	1.604006	1.433500	70.4135
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.143458	0.128208	6.2976
Switzerland	Franc	0.651685	0.582411	28.6080
Canada	Dollar	0.714067	0.638162	31.3465
Singapore	Dollar	0.625807	0.559284	27.4720
Australia	Dollar	0.555556	0.496500	24.3881
Bahrain	Dinar	2.968178	2.652661	130.2987
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.298401	0.266681	13.0994
Brunei	Dollar	0.622500	0.556328	27.3268
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000107	0.000096	0.0047
Thailand	Baht	0.025184	0.022507	1.1055
UAE	Dirham	0.304648	0.272264	13.3736
Korea	Won	0.000854	0.000763	0.0375
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.893700	43.8985
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.456942	22.4450
France	Franc	0.152450	0.136244	6.6923
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.405543	19.9203
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.064948	3.1902
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022154	1.0882
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000462	0.0227
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.150310	7.3832
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004458	0.2190
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005371	0.2638
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022154	1.0882
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.134765	55.7397

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Wednesday, March 28, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69.5	69.5	69	69.5	232,300
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	16	16	16	16	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	50.5	50.5	50.5	50.5	14,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	225	225	224	225	67,840
Philippine National Bank	48	48	47.5	47.5	29,500
Phil. Savings Bank	29.5	30	29.5	29.5	20,800
Rizal Comm'l Bkg Corp A	20	20	20	20	1,000
Security Bank Corp.	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	92,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.42	1.46	1.42	1.46	85,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1175	1180	1175	1180	5,710
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	820	840	820	840	4,550
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	42	42	42	42	22,400
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.52	0.54	0.52	0.54	1,320,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	660	660	660	660	300
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	200,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	705	710	695	695	60,800
Ivantage Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.94	0.95	90,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	76,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	44.5	44.5	44	44	58,200
Manila Electric Co. B	56	56	51.5	52.5	447,300
Petron Corp.	1.64	1.66	1.64	1.64	754,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	225,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.1	1.12	1.04	1.08	4,258,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.37	0.41	0.36	0.36	60,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Cement Corp.	0.38	0.4	0.38	0.4	200,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	660,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12	12	12	12	182,600
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	34	34	32.5	33	209,000
Pancake House Inc.	1.56	1.7	1.56	1.7	140,000
RFM Corp.	1.12	1.16	1.12	1.16	719,000
San Miguel Corp. A	47.5	47.5	47.5	47.5	80,100
San Miguel Corp. B	54	55	53	53	47,000
Universal Robina Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	208,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	20,000
Ayala Corp.	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.4	715,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	27,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.25	2,600
A. Soriano Corp.	0.23	0.25	0.22	0.25	180,000
APC Group Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	80,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	50,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc	13	13	13	13	3,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.46	2.5	2.44	2.44	6,825,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	50,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	40,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.02	960,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2	2	2	2	1,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	21.25	21.25	20.5	20.5	146,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	370,000
Ipeople Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	60,000
Ipeople Inc. B	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	50,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.16	2.18	2.16	2.18	510,000
Macroasia Corp	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	5,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.72	180,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.49	810,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.49	180,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	250,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.28	250,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	88,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.74	0.75	0.74	0.74	140,000
Music Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	471,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	20,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	3,500,000
Prime Gaming Mgmt. Corp.	20	20	20	20	11,316,000
Philtread Tire & Rubber A	4	4	4	4	10,000
Philtread Tire & Rubber B	4	4	4	4	5,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	10.75	11.25	10.75	11.25	126,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	2,030,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.58	0.6	0.56	0.56	2,040,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.52	0.6	0.52	0.52	170,000
Manila Jockey Club	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	4,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	50,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	42	42.5	42	42	376,100
Equitable PCI Bank-War	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	139,000
Jollibee Warrants	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	7,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	36,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	7,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
Waterfront Phils-Warrant	0.045	0.045	0.043	0.043	400,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	310	310	310	310	10
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	1,824,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	1,000,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	620,000
Filinvest Land, Inc.	.96	2	1.9	1.94	12,170,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	300,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.055	0.06	0.055	0.06	4,100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.4	2,596,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.115	0.12	0.09	0.09	3,200,000
MINING					
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	500,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	150,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	500,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	114,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	35,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	10,000,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.022	0.02	0.021	3,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	6,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	220,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	13,000,000

DISCLOSURES

THE LISTING of 30,271 common shares of **Jollibee Foods Corp.**, availed under the tandem stock purchase and option plan, is set for March 29. This brings the number of common shares listed under the said plan to 827,047.

* * *

METRO Pacific Corp. secured temporary funding of up to $90 million from the **First Pacific Group**. This will enable Metro Pacific to meet its convertible bond redemption obligations, which could total $88 million, due in April. The transaction is subject to certain conditions, including the approval of First Pacific's shareholders and the **Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.**

* * *

THE BOARD of **Ionics Inc.** postponed its annual stockholders' meeting set on May 18 in its by-laws to June 29. It will be held at the Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club, Cabuyao, Laguna, at 10:30 a.m.

* * *

ALSONS Consolidated Resources Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 29, at 3 p.m., at the Linden Suites, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

* * *

PETRON Corp. denied reports it was forming a consortium with **San Miguel Corp.** and **Manila Electric Co.** to rehabilitate **Urban Bank.**

* * *

SOUTH China Resources Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 18, 2 p.m., at the Balmori Room of the Peninsula Manila, Makati City.

* * *

LAWYER Antonio Pacis resigned as director of **Security Bank Corp.** effective immediately. Jose Facundo was elected to fill his unexpired term.

* * *

MABUHAY Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 25, 10 a.m., at the New World Hotel, Makati City. ***Compiled by Armin P. Adina, PDI Research***

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DOF claims ₱100B in taxes not paid

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has unearthed more than P100 billion in uncollected taxes last year and nearly half of the amount was due to leakage in the implementation of the 10-percent value-added tax.

Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo said the tax leakage was due to the poor implementation of tax measures mainly by the Bureau of Internal Revenue. He said this was also partly due to cases of tax avoidance by certain banks, cigarette and beer manufacturers, carmakers and professionals.

Of the estimated amount of tax leaks, Romulo said the DOF has so far documented about P70 billion.

"When we look at it, it is as if there was no governance in the last three years because policies were not followed, so taxes were not collected," said the finance chief.

He accused tax collection agencies during the Estrada administration of sitting on administrative orders providing for several revenue collection enhancement measures.

Because of the poor revenue collections in the past two to three years, the government's budget deficit swelled to P136.1 billion last year from P111.7 billion in the previous year.

Romulo said the leakage in the value-added tax system alone has amounted to about P45 billion last year. The DOF also discovered an P11-billion leakage from the banking sector, in the form of uncollected taxes on interest incomes from deposits.

Based on the DOF estimates, the uncollected taxes from cigarette makers amounted to P1.3 billion; P1.3 billion, on fringe benefits; P4.9 billion, on corporate income tax; P1.2 billion, from non-life insurance, and P500 million from the agriculture and fisheries sectors.

Gov't moves to improve tax incentives program

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has formed a special inter-agency committee to draw up proposals to sharpen the government's incentives program as it gears up for more intense competition from Thailand, Malaysia and China in getting foreign capital.

This was revealed yesterday by Board of Investments managing head Vincent Perez who vowed to take a more pro-active approach in attracting investments specifically in five key areas—tourism, information technology, education, agriculture modernization and logistics.

Based on preliminary discussions, the committee—composed of representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Finance and the National Economic and Development Authority—was eager to standardize fiscal perks in order to avoid confusion especially among foreign investors.

Foreign investors have been baffled by the multiple incentives packages offered by different agencies such as the BOI, Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Clark Development Corp., Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and the Cagayan Export Zone Authority.

Perez considered this as a distraction that the government can ill-afford at a time when other Asean countries and China have been aggressively drawing in foreign investors with their consistent and simple fiscal perks program.

"In Thailand and Singapore, investors have to go to only one agency to inquire about what incentives they can get. With so many incentives-giving bodies in the country, some investors resort to forum shopping to get the best incentives," he said.

Perez said he was in favor of balancing all government incentives to the Peza level, which he found superior among the packages offered by all incentives-granting agencies of the government. Peza's incentives range from tax breaks to duty-free importation of capital equipment to exemption from local taxes.

The committee is expected to come up with its proposals by May this year. These will be used as basis of the government's legislative agenda to amend the Omnibus Investments Code in the incoming Congress. The government has given up on getting the legislators nod on its proposed changes to the incentives package in the incumbent Congress. Perez said all proposals made previously, such as the 12-year income tax holiday, would be under review.

He stressed that the review was being undertaken not only to rationalize the incentives system but also to ensure that the government was getting its money's worth (in terms of foregone revenues) in granting these come-ons.

US slowdown . . .

(From page B1)

gional headquarters here said in a report.

"One good indication is that domestic demand slowed down before exports did."

Apart from Hong Kong and Singapore, no other Asian country, Japan included, has a healthy financial system, the bank said.

Most financial systems in the region "are still too weak to perform a proper financial intermediation function."

Asset deflation is also still affecting corporate and personal balance sheets as well as bank collateral, and is a hindrance to economic growth even in financially healthy Hong Kong, ABN-AMRO said.

A key solution to these internal factors is to cut interest rates, but Asian central banks are constrained by volatility in their currencies.

"Ironically, Asian governments will not have a free hand to further ease monetary policy unless the US dollar tanks and US interest rates come way down, which would come only if the US has a crash landing," the bank said.

With the US economy flirting with recession and Japan sputtering, Asia could be in for a massive economic growth forecast downgrade this year, ABN-AMRO warned.

"Economic conditions in Asia have clearly been deteriorating much faster than expected over the past few months. The forecasts of most economists and analysts, including some of our own, are behind the curve," it said.

ABN-AMRO's average forecast for gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 10 Asian economies this year was 3.93 percent, well below the market consensus which averaged 4.69 percent. *AFP*

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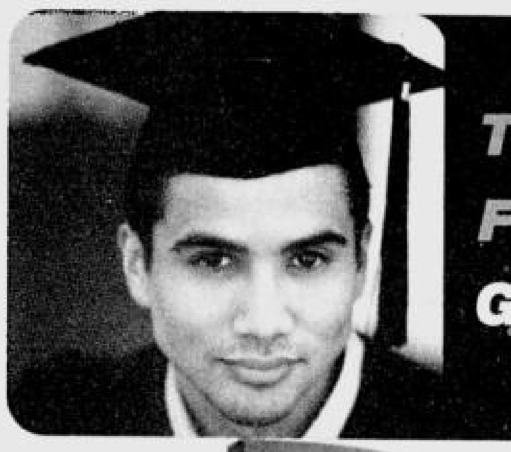

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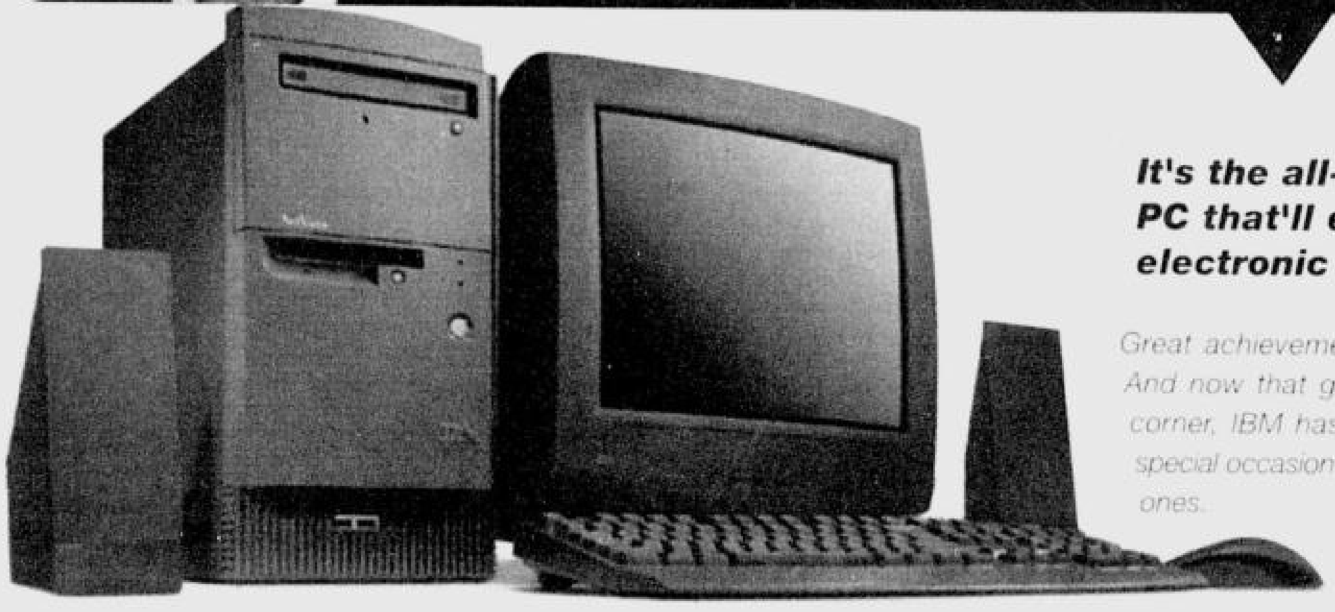

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People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Assistant Editor

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sprojects@inquirer.com.ph

Habitat for Humanity and Cisco wire homes for Internet

HABITAT for Humanity is a well-known international organization that brings hope and housing to low-income families and individuals around the world. Cisco Systems has a long-standing partnership with Habitat. In one of Cisco's most recent efforts, a group of company volunteers is wiring a group of homes in Redwood City, California as they are being built for future low-income homeowners.

Thanks to the Cisco volunteers in the Community and Education Technical Advocates (Ceta) program at Cisco, the new residents of these homes will have first-rate Internet capabilities. Cerafin Castillo, who leads the volunteer group and is product donation program manager in Cisco's corporate philanthropy group, has recruited an enthusiastic corps to help with the project.

This project is part of a larger contribution of $1 million over three years that Cisco has committed to Habitat for construction of homes in several locations around the world, including Africa, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Asia Pacific, and the United States. Cisco employees in the various locations will be encouraged to volunteer their time as individuals or with their co-workers for a team-building offsite. Cisco's partnership with Habitat for Humanity International is one example of its Global Reach Grant Program, through which Cisco makes investments in programs throughout the world, utilizing technology and volunteers to make a "hands on" difference.

FOOD, PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE JULIUS MAGGI KITCHEN

Food styling expert Linda Floro (second from left) and professional food photographer Mark Floro (extreme left) recently conducted a lecture and demonstration on food styling and photography at the Julius Maggi Kitchen. The participants are members of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Educators of the Philippines (Cohrep). Photo shows the participants with their finished products and Nestlé Consumers Services assistant manager Adele Medina (sixth from left).

E-COMMERCE PARTNERS

TNT Express Worldwide (Phils.), Inc., the local representative of global express distribution, logistics and international mail giant TNT Post Group, has signed an agreement with BayanTrade.com, a business-to-business exchange for products and services. The agreement allows BayanTrade.com to utilize TNT's e-commerce service solution, iConnections. iConnections will enable online customers of BayanTrade.com to conveniently monitor the movements of their consignments from pick-up to point-of-delivery as well as book advance shipments via TNT's global track and trace system. Photo shows TNT Express country general manager Jose Luis Romero-Salas and BayanTrade.com president and CEO Carol Carreon formalizing the agreement as TNT Customer Interface Technology coordinator Abegail Gutierrez-Mapue (left) and BayanTrade.com chief technology officer Dante Briones (right) look on.

FRANCHISE MARKETING CONSULTANT

Net Surfers Club Franchise Corporation president Ernie Rojas formally announced the hiring of GMB Franchise Developer as franchising marketing consultant in simple rites at Tony Roma's. NS Club has boosted its position among the top 10 ISPs in the country with the move to franchise its business. In photo are (from left) NS Club marketing director Homer Nievera, NS Club Franchise Corp. president Ernie Rojas, GMB president Butz Bartolome and guest Milleth de Jesus. The company is now open to franchising in selected areas nationwide and can be contacted at 951-5555/4444 or via email franchise@nsclub.net.

EXECS VISIT ALCATEL IN CANADA

Senior executives of Digital Telecommunications Philippines, Inc. (Digitel) recently visited the Alcatel office and manufacturing facility in Ottawa, Canada to inspect the ATM 36170 that will be supplied by Alcatel for Digitel's optical transmission backbone network. The US$50-million turnkey project, the first of its kind in the country, leverages Alcatel's state-of-the-art technologies to provide broadband services along the entire Digitel network. In photo are (from left): Enri Rodriguez, Alcatel in the Philippines carrier internetworking division general manager; Brian Go, managing director of DigitelOne, Digitel's Internet subsidiary; Hector Dimalanta, Digitel vice president for network planning; and Chris Carreon, Alcatel in the Philippines vice president for key account management-competitive carriers.

ACA VIDEO MEMBERS GETS BEAD SHOP ITEMS

Get funky with the coolest accessories and dress up like your favorite stars as ACA Video launches its newest promo together with The Bead Shop. Seen at the recent contract signing are (from left) the Bead Shop business partner Michelle Ann Yap and president Valerie Lopez; ACA Video president Amable C. Aguiluz IX and vice president for finance Christine Aguiluz. The recent tie-up between the video rental giant and hip accessory shop gives ACA Video members the chance to win gift certificates to The Bead Shop worth P150, awarded on the 6th visit within one month at participating ACA Video outlets. Similarly, loyal customers of The Bead Shop will receive free VHS tapes of their favorite movies courtesy of ACA Video.

New firm's travel incentives

AIA Products, Inc., a fast-rising cosmetics firm engaged in direct selling, recently announced that regular travel incentives await sales directors who meet the company's standard criteria in production.

Foreign and local travel is part of AIA's total incentive package for outstanding sales producers. In the past, management has sent its top producers to Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok and Boracay.

The AIA Board comprises sales directors who have met the company's sales performance criteria. Despite its rigid standards, however, many have qualified—signifying the company's quality of training and recruitment.

AIA Products, Inc. is located at Alcco Building, Ortigas Avenue, Greenhills. It has two branches, AIA Central (head office) and AIA South (Las Piñas). AIA North (Caloocan) is set to open.

BITS Clips

Fun grammar study

EXECUTIVE Editors Inc. claims that studying grammar can be fun. The company's "Grammar for Smart People," a one-day course designed as a review of English grammar for adults and professionals, avoids difficult rules and definitions, and focuses on the few key principles that make up the bulk of daily English usage. The active and participatory workshop strengthens basic skills in speaking and writing good English, and also clarifies common Filipino errors in English. The next session of "Grammar for Smart People" is scheduled for March 30. For details, please call Executive Editors at 887-3797 or 98, fax 887-3796 or e-mail exccedit@mozcom.com.

Arellano homecoming

Arellano University will hold a grand alumni homecoming for all high school and college alumni at Holiday Inn, Manila, on May 19 at 5 p.m. The theme for this year is "Thanks for the Memories." For more information please contact the Arellano University Alumni Affairs Office at 734-4659 or 734-7371 to 79 loc. 221 and 224. Look for Ninfa G. Velasco, Bebot Salgado and Glenda Alano, or call AU high school branches.

Letran 76 bingo socials

The Letran High School class of 1976 is holding a bingo social on April 1 at the Mount Carmel Church multi-purpose hall in New Manila, Quezon City. The Class, known as "The Spirit of 76," is holding the affair as one in a series of fund raising activities for various projects. Tickets are available from class members as well as the gates. For more information, call Jun Cortez at 416-2168 or cell no. 0919-6103648.

Dasco family reunion

The family of Simporoso and Felisa Dasco will have a grand family reunion on April 8 at the Bacood basketball court in Bacood, Sta. Mesa, Manila. The affair starts at 9 a.m. For inquiries, please call 691-2386 (Alma), 714-5516 (Melinda), 714-9726 (Baby) and 716-1639 (Marilyn).

Lenten offerings from Legend Hotel

From April 1 to 15, The Legend Hotel-Manila complements the start of the Lenten season with a Family Weekend Promo. Package starts at P1,200 net. Guests can enjoy an overnight accommodation in a Standard room. Children 12 years old and below can stay in the same room for free. Guests can use the swimming pool, outdoor jacuzzi and mini gym for free. There are also various attractive come-ons for kids and the whole family starting April 12. Book now. Call 633-1501 to 10 for reservations and inquiries.

First Buddha exhibit

The Tomlinson Collection is holding its first Buddha exhibition "On the Path to Enlightenment: Hope, Symbolism and Aspiration" until April 1. Every aspect of enlightenment is represented in the works of Buddhist art from Thailand, Burma, China and Tibet. Over 30 works of art—statues, ritual objects, furniture and paintings will be displayed. The exhibition is held in Tomlinson Makati showroom at 40 Jupiter Street, cor. Paseo de Roxas.

Mario's 'Salute' to graduates

Mario's Restaurant joins graduates celebrating their victories with a complimentary lunch/dinner until April 30. For inquiries and reservations, call Mario's Ortigas at 634-3417 to 19 and Mario's Quezon City at 372-0360/415-3887.

Diabetes, body fat symposium

To unfold the mystery of diabetes and body fat, Health From Earth Corp. will be conducting an educational public lecture on the ability of certain foods to eliminate or prevent diabetes. A number of books and research papers will also be available for review during the symposium at the Horizon EDSA Hotel, corner Pioneer and Boni Avenues on March 31. Call the Health from Earth Corp. hotline at 660-2290. Text your queries to 0918-9005590 or 0917-7953819, or e-mail healthph@eudoramail.com

Avid's 'Zero-Six' deals

Avid Sales Corporation, one of the country's leading proponents of the digital lifestyles, offers the "Zero-Six" promo on the Sony CCD-TR317 Video 8 HandyCam at all Avid Sony shops, AV Center outlets, Best Brand shops and Beyond stores. The promo offers six equal payments on this model and the CCD-TRV57 with zero interest. Promo is good until March 31.

'PRIVATE LIVES' AT BANKARD TICKETCHARGE

Bankard Trilogy 2001 kicks off with "Private Lives" a 1930 comedy by Noel Coward featuring veteran stage actors (seated from left) Lara Fabregas, Pinky Amador, (standing from left) Michael Williams and Richard Cunanan. The play runs on March 30, 31 and April 6 and 7 at 8 p.m. with matinees at 3 p.m. on March 31, and April 1, 7 and 8. Performances will be at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue corner Sen Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City. Paul Holme directs.

BB. PILIPINAS BEAUTY VISITS ALMA MATER

Centro Escolar University proudly welcomed back recently crowned Bb. Pilipinas International Maricar C. Tolosa, batch '99 Computer Science and Information System graduate from the CEU School of Accountancy, Business, Secretariat and Public Administration (ABSP). Tolosa bested 30 other contestants in the final pageant of the Bb. Pilipinas held at the Araneta Coliseum last March 10. She will represent the country in the Miss International Pageant in Tokyo, Japan this November. Photo shows Maricar with former mentors (from left) School of ABSP dean Conrado E. Iñigo; executive vice president Maria L. Ayuyao; assistant vice president and dean of student affairs Claire Z. Manalo, and School of Arts and Humanities dean Cecilia G. Valmonte.

IFLR AWARDEE

Sycip Salazar Hernandez and Gatmaitan, the country's largest law firm, was recently conferred the Philippines Law Firm of the Year 2000 from the International Financial Law Review at the IFLR award dinner held at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Hong Kong March 1. The IFLR is a prestigious legal periodical published by the Euromoney Group. Photo shows Andres G. Gatmaitan, managing partner of Sycip Salazar Hernandez and Gatmaitan, receiving the award from Nick Ferguson, Asia Editor of the IFLR at the awards dinner at the Ritz Carlton Hotel

Hang Ten's colorful slippers

A summer getaway will not be complete without a walk on the beach or a mountain trek on comfortable and colorful Hang Ten slippers. The good news is, the stylish footwear is given away for free until March 30 with every minimum single receipt purchase of regular Hang Ten merchandise worth P600.

Greenhills exhibit

An exhibit for manufacturers, suppliers, dealers, and distributors is ongoing at the 5th Bookfair, Gift Suggestions and Corporate Giveaways until April 1 at the Centermall, Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan. For forthcoming exhibits visit Archer Exhibit Exponent at Unit 23 and 24, Diamond Lane, Shoppesville Arcade, Greenhills, or call 721-1464/722-7062.

CITEM deadline

The Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (Citem) invites participants in the upcoming E-Services Philippines trade fair on June 28-30 at the Philippine Trade Training Center on Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Interested companies have until March 30 to submit their applications to Citem's IT Services and Electronics Division. Call Citem at 832-5044/831-2201 to 09 locals 212 and 251; fax 832-3965/834-0177, or e-mail itservices@citem.com.ph.

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HUGO BENNETT P. BRIZUELA

peacefully joined his Creator on March 27, 2001 at the age of 82.

His bereaved children **Martin, Rico, Herman, Gene, Joel, Hugo Jr., Dina, Vicky, Josie, Irene** and **Aimee**; grandchildren and great-grandchildren, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel, Dr. A. Santos Avenue, Parañaque City (March 28).

His body will be flown to Los Angeles, California today, March 29, 2001 for viewing at the Holy Cross Mortuary 5835 W. Slauson Avenue, Culver City, CA 90230 on Friday; March 30, 2001, 2:00 - 10:00 pm.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 31, 2001 at the Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery and Mausoleum, 5835 W. Slauson Avenue, Culver City, CA 90230.

(Ret.) Brig. Gen. Luis A. Gonzalez Villa-Real

*Joined **Nene** (†) peacefully in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ on March 27, 2001 at the age of 86.*

His present wife **Liway**; sister **Paquita**; children by first marriage **Luis** and **Carol**, **Menchu** and **Ditos**, **Tito** and **Ditas**, **Linda** and **Jun**; children by present wife **Rory** and **Manuel**, **Teya** and **Ricky**, **Taloy**; his 25 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren praise and thank God for the grace of long life He has given to '**Luisito**.'

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. He will be transferred to the Last Watering Hole, Veterans Center, Camp Aguinaldo on March 29, 2001 in the morning. Interment at the North Cemetery will be on Sunday, April 1, 2001 at 12:00 noon.

Please omit flowers.

Dr. Pedro F. Rimban

of Ilocos Sur, Cagayan and Baguio City
and UST College of Medicine Class of 1952

passed away on March 25, 2001 at the age of 73.

His loving wife **Pacita**; children **Girlie** and **Henry Juan**, **Boyette** and **Luz**, **Ada** and **Boyet Uy**, **Stephen** and **Ermie**; and **Erwin** and **Juliet**; grandchildren **Angeline** and **Patrick Juan**; **Kris, Allan** and **Karla**; **Vianca, Raymond** and **Denise Uy**; **Stephanie** and **Sabrina**;

His sisters **Raymunda** (+), **Victoria R. Ramirez, Sixta R. Rimban** (+), **Petra** (+), **Epifania R. Rimando, Apolonia R. Gamboa** (+); in-laws, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Baguio Funeral Homes in Naguilian Road. Interment will be on Saturday, March 31 at the Pyramid Memorial Park in Kias, Baguio City after the 2 p.m. mass at St. Vincent Church.

LEOLINDA C. RAMONES, M.D.

May 24, 1943 - March 28, 2001

Her husband **Dr. Roger**; children **Lynne, Vicky, Tina, Tessa** and **Jr.**; brothers and sisters **Norma, Sylvia, Tom, Manding, Rolando** (†), request the pious readers to say a little prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

The body lies in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapel (Chapel A), 296 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City. (to be announced later). For further details please contact tel. no. 931-35-29.

"I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are Yours."
John 17:9

---

†
D.O.M

*"La paciencia todo lo alcanza
solo Dios basta."*

Doña Carmen Rivero de Donato

viuda de **D. Mariano Rosario Donato**

*Entregó su alma a Dios el dia Martes, 27 de Marzo del 2001
a las 4:20 de la tarde, a los 99 años, despues de recibir
los auxilios espirituales.*

Sus deconsolados hijos **Philomena** y **Antonio F. Laurel, Milagros, Salvador** y **Lourdes Benetúa, Salud** y **Alejandro T. de Castro, Angelita** y **Andres Bautista, Socorro vda. de Armando Pantaleón, Bro. Rafael, F.S.C., Raoul** y **Margaret McCarthy, Maria del Carmen**, sus hermanos **Col. Salvador Rivero** y **Da. Asunción R. vda. de Vaca**, nietos, bisnietos, sobrinos, sobrinas y demas parientes, y su fiel cocinera **Leoning** ruegan al piadoso lector una oración por el eterno descanso de su alma.

Se encuentra el cuerpo presente en la capilla de Sta. Scholastica, calle León Guinto, Manila.

El entierro tendrá lugar el Domingo, 1°, de Abril, 2001, despues de la Santa Misa, a las 10 de la mañana. El duelo se despíde en el Cementerio de Manila Memorial, Sucat, Parañaque.

Se ruega que en vez de flores, donación para el BAMCREF Educational Foundation se agradecerá.

HECTOR L. TAN

of Calamba, Laguna

Born January 6, 1931

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 27, 2001 at the age of 70.

His bereaved wife **Purificacion Tee Vda. de Tan**; and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Hectan Chapel, Lecheria, Halang, Calamba, Laguna.

Interment will be on March 31, 2001, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. at the Rizal Cemetery, Calamba, Laguna.

Masses and spiritual prayers will be appreciated.

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San Juan 1573m²whse off@ 23K/m² 8440130

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**Le Metroploe Salcedo 3br 2pkg 175m² FF 80T 8253244

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09178381928 ★09178112635
manila@cbre.com

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CONDO/TWNHSE

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P5,500/mo.Malate
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•WACK WACK Twin Towers• 2BR, Fully Furn., 168sqm Magnificent view of golf course. Golf playing rights also available 817-9518

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VVERDE 3BR FA=250SQM P35-38T • 723-2391

VVERDE 6 2BR P19T 723-2391 • 0917-3848111

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2BR 3TB 90sqm P20T mo GREENHILLS •T8247758•

Eisenhower Comm'l Unit 83.80m² 5313742

OTHER AREAS

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OFF Avenida nr Raon 7356516

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Mktl Apartel 500-700/day 3T-4.2T/wk ful/fur 8995386

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P1800/mo Stalls
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Sn Pedro Lag. 8086006/07

**JMT BLdg 318m² at 280/m² Call 6812457

Ortigas Center Office 90sqm B. New Sale/Rent 0917-8986655

**Taipan Ortigas 129m² Call 681-2457

**Tektite 101m² Up at 300/m² Call 6812457

30sqm office space 702 Shaw T-6314141/6315151 Lolit

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TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

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'94 205T '98 255T '96 250T GRACE 731-3492

KIA

'98 Pregio 345T 7313492

BESTA 185-275T 731-3492

Ceres 1996 P110T Dropside Nw Tires 6458678

MERCEDES

98 MB100D 385T 7313492

MB 126 Body See 2 apprcte • 634-8160

MITSUBISHI

Ranger US ver. 4x4 9126976

S-Wagon Acq.'93 634-8160

NISSAN

98 CEFIRO ELITE A/T Blk 780T 19TKm A1 8420343

SAFARI '97 loaded 9124428

TOYOTA

CRLLA '97 GLI A/T 9126976

Toyota Imported Duties/Txs Unpaid:1989 Hiace Commuter 11-Seater Dsl, 1991 Corona 2000CC 4DSED, 1992 Hilux P-up Dsl. Call Bella 8171507/ 8939593 9AM-3PM Wkdays

VOLVO

1989 Volvo 740 4D SED 2000CC Imported Duties/Txs Unpaid Call Bella 8171507/ 8939593 9AM-3PM Wkdays

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CARS FOR RENT

Cheap Vans 'n MB 9344988

L3•Cars• 9273453 4538295

Congratulation to the New License **MEDTECH** who have passed the examination which was given by the PRC on March 12-13, 2001 are the ff:

1. **Mercy Llanes Aglugob**
2. **Laila Ty Chua**
3. **Joy Uy Delfin**
4. **Jesusa Sendenia Morales**
5. **Cherlie Vicente Te**

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2600 Legarda Street, Sampaloc, Manila

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Bnew HiAce 6336754 9100893

Van Coaster Bus 440-91-71

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H-100 Van/Honda 920-7360

★Bus Coaster Van Car 4172953

IT/ Hiace 9136710/4333682

L300 T 4161105 / 7411356

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VAN 12-15 STR. 8257135

Car Vans 4535288/9296250

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2% w/oTaking Car 3732083

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3646928

1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523-24

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BAKERY EQUIPMENT

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Lab/Choco 3mo/10T 9331434

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MISCELLANEOUS

Bnew PC P15.5T 9254960

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Exp. Taxi Driver 635-3503

FEMALE

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w/Exp., Smart, Computer Lit. 920-5715 • 435-2511

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Send your resume with photo and copy of NBI clearance to:
FILTELCOM MARKETING CORP. Unit 511 No. 6772 TMBC BUILDING., AYALA AVENUE, MAKATI

IMMEDIATE HIRING
•Female Travel Assistant• Graduate of 4yr.Tourism or other related course (advantage but not necessary). Bring resume and be ready for an interview at Nachimpan G.T.M. U-210 Clinnan Court Bldg. #2205 P.Burgos St. cor. Villanueva Pasay City **Tel.# 834-6543**

LADY BEAUTICIAN 913-7892

SECRETARY w/computer & bookkeeping experience **Call 9297110 9248217**

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
KAGAWARAN NG UGNAYANG PANLABAS
PRE-QUALIFICATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (PBAC)

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID

The Department of Foreign Affairs invites all interested parties to pre-qualify and to submit sealed bids for the following services:

a. JANITORIAL SERVICES
b. HEALTH CARE SERVICES
c. DIPLOMATIC POUCH SERVICES
d. PHOTOCOPYING SERVICES

Bid documents may be secured from the Pre-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC), Office of the Undersecretary for Administration, 12th Floor, DFA Building, 2330 Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City, beginning **15 March 2001** after payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 1,000.00 charged for the pre-qualification papers and processing for each of the above service. Pre-qualification requirements should be submitted on or before the dates specified below. A notarized undertaking authorizing the Department and/or its representative to verify the submissions shall be submitted together with the pre-qualification documents. For purposes of clarifying certain issues, Pre-Bid Conferences may be held upon determination by PBAC.

The detailed Terms of Reference for these services will be distributed to the pre-qualified bidders after the payment of non-refundable administrative fee of PHP 5,000.00 to the Cashier of the Department. Sealed bids shall be submitted to the PBAC not later than the time and date specified below and thereafter shall be publicly opened on the date and place also specified below. For purposes of bidding these services, the following schedule shall be observed:

ACTIVITY	JANITORIAL SERVICE	HEALTH CARE SERVICE	DIPLOMATIC POUCH SERVICE	PHOTOCOPYING SERVICE
Submission of Pre-qual. Docs	04 April 2001, 1700H (deadline)	05 April 2001, 1700H (deadline)	06 April 2001, 1700H (deadline)	06 April 2001, 1700H (deadline)
Submission of Sealed Bids	10 May 2001, 1000H, DFA Board Lounge	10 May 2001, 1400H, DFA Board Lounge	11 May 2001, 1000H, DFA Board Lounge	11 May 2001, 1400H, DFA Board Lounge
Opening of Sealed Bids	10 May 2001, 1100H, DFA Board Lounge	10 May 2001, 1500H, DFA Board Lounge	11 May 2001, 1100H, DFA Board Lounge	11 May 2001, 1500H, DFA Board Lounge

The Department reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality and award the contract to the bidder whose proposal is deemed the most advantageous to the Department. The Department assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. The Department also reserves the right to confiscate the bid bond should the winning bidder refuse to accept the contract.

(Sgd.) **FRANKLIN M. EBDALIN**
Undersecretary for Administration and Chairperson, PBAC

(PDI--March 15, 22 & 29, 2001)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

CARE GIVER T5280722

•Makati Learning Center• needs 1 Assistant Teacher. Must have good writing & comm.skills CALL 8179518

Ofc Staff 9134470 Roxan

RE Broker 292-6137

Sales Mktg. M/F 744-1958

PUBLIC NOTICES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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•EARN FR HOME 8531008•

RTW Cash/Consign 3738821

RTW Cash/Term 3714226

Supervisor US$ 8951381

T-SHIRT SALE TEL4383147

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of ISAGANI GAN SAYO was extrajudicially settled by his heirs per Doc. No. 955; Page No. 26; Book No. 26; Series of 2000 of Notary Public Amador C. Casino of Makati City(PDI-Mar. 29, Apr. 5 & 11,2001)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
MAYNILA, PILIPINAS

DISPOSAL COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Notice is hereby given that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will sell various *UNSERVICEABLE MOTOR VEHICLES AND SCRAP MATERIALS* located at the BSP Motorpool and Sports Complex, P Casal Street, Quiapo, Manila and at the BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sr Streets, Malate, Manila thru sealed bids to be received by the Committee not later than *10:00 AM* on *April 6, 2001* at Room MR-2C, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sr. Streets, Malate, Manila

Interested parties may inspect the aforesaid items at the BSP Motorpool and Sports Complex, P. Casal Street, Quiapo, Manila and at the BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sr. Streets, Malate, Manila before the bidding date.

Forms and further information may be obtained from the Committee's Executive Officer, Ms. Aurora S. Pascual, Administrative Services Department, Room 111, Ground FLoor, 5-Storey Building, BSP, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sr. Streets, Malate, Manila, Telephone No. 524-98-98

March 26, 2001 (Sgd.) MELPIN A. GONZAGA
Chairman

(PDI - March 29 2001)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given to the public that the following stock certificates of SV. Farms Inc. were lost:

STOCK CERT. NO.	IN THE NAME OF	NO. OF SHARES
001	Atty Serafin Villanueva, Jr.	640
002	Alice M. Villanueva	640
003	Ma. Rosario M. Villanueva	600
004	Ma. Regina M. Villanueva	600
005	Lourdes L. Villanueva	20
006	Atty Serafin L. Villanueva	3,750
007	Alice M. Villanueva	3,750
008	Atty Serafin L. Villanueva	1,750
009	Alice M. Villanueva	2,000
010	Ma. Rosario M. Villanueva	1,750
011	Ma. Regina M. Villanueva	1,750
012	Alice M. Villanueva	390
013	Ma. Rosario M. Villanueva	1,000
014	Ma. Regina M. Villanueva	1,000
015	Antonio Cabral, Jr.	390
016	Atty Serafin L. Villanueva	10
017	Ma. Rosario V. Cabral	1,190
018	Ma. Regina Villanueva	1,150
019	Vicente Geolingo	5
020	Atty Serafin Villanueva	5
021	Jose Manuel L. Villanueva	21
022	Ma. Regina Villanueva	596
023	Rosario V. Cabral	596
024	Antonio A. Cabral, Jr.	388

After the expiration of one year from the date of the last publication of this notice and no contest has been presented, new certificates will be issued by the corporation to the shareholder as above stated

(PDI – Mar 22 29 & Apr 5 2001)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Quezon City

26 March 2001

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce the winning bidders for the supply of rice and corn for the biddings conducted last March 8, 9 and 22, 2001:

I. **Rice:**

A. 100,000 MT 25% Brokens Long Grain White Rice:
Date of Bidding: 08 March 2001

Name of Supplier	Volume in MT (10% MOLSO)	Price (in US$/MT, C&F, FO)
1. GLENCORE INT'L. AG	50,000	147.93, Cash
2. VIETNAM SOUTHERN FOOD CORP. (Vietnam)	50,000	148.98, Usance L/C, 180 days from B/L date

B. 300,000 MT 25% Brokens Long Grain White Rice[1]:
Date of Bidding: 09 March 2001

Name of Supplier	Volume in MT (10% MOLSO)	Price (in US$/MT, C&F, FO)
1. DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN TRADE - THAILAND	150,000	145.35, Usance L/C, 180 days from B/L date

C. 150,000 MT 25% Brokens Long Grain White Rice[2]:

Name of Supplier	Volume in MT (10% MOLSO)	Price (in US$/MT, C&F, FO)
1. VIETNAM SOUTHERN FOOD CORP. (Vietnam)	150,000	145.20, Usance L/C, 180 days from B/L date

II. **Corn:**

A. 30,000 MT White Kernelled Corngrains:
Date of Bidding: 22 March 2001[3]
Date of Re-offer/Negotiation: 23 March 2001

Name of Supplier	Volume in MT (10% MOLSO)	Price (in US$/MT, C&F, FO)
1. LOUIS DREYFUS ASIA PTE LTD.	30,000	151.17 Cash

[1] Conducted among foreign government suppliers and only 150,000 MT was awarded to the lowest offeror.
[2] Representing balance of the unawarded volume during the March 09, 2001 tender.
[3] Bidding declared a failure, outright 1st and 2nd re-offers were conducted March 22 and 23 which resulted in the negotiated award.

(Sgd.) **VICENTE V. RACHO**
Chairman, PBAC and
Assistant Administrator

(PDI – Mar. 29, 2001)

INQUIRER
TRiViA
By BONG BARRAMEDA

Fearsomefires

The worst fires in recorded world history:*

		Year	Killed
1.	Kwanto, Japan (following an earthquake)	1923	60,000
2.	London Bridge, England	1212	3,000*
3.	Peshtigo, Wisconsin, USA (forest fire)	1871	2,682
4.	Santiago, Chile (Church of La Campaña)	1863	2,500
5.	Chungking, China (docks)	1949	1,700

*Burned, crushed, and drowned in ensuing panic.

A Friendly Reminder. All too often people tend to ignore the location of the fire exits (if there are any, that is) when in an office building, theater, restaurant, or any other public place. *Do* take note -- no matter how brief the visit. In a high-rise building, don't use the elevator if a fire breaks out; heat or power failure can make it stall or go to the floor that's burning. If there's smoke or fire in a room or corridor, keep as low as possible, and crawl if necessary. Put a handkerchief -- wet, if possible -- over your mouth and nose as an improvised filter. Smoke and flames fill a room from the ceiling downwards, so that air near the floor should be easier to breathe, and visibility will be better.

First of All. The world's first fire engine was built for the German city of Augsburg by Anthony Blatner, a goldsmith, in 1518. It consisted of a large lever-operated squirt mounted on a wheeled carriage.

WORD WATCH

Trahedya : from the Spanish *tragedia*, which in turn derives from the Greek *tragos* ('goat') + *oide* ('song'): probably from the goatskin costume of the performers acting as satyrs

PDI - - March 29, 2001

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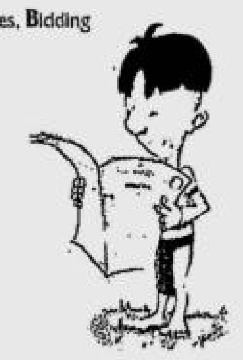

in **Luzon**

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J & P Agency
Parking Lot Upper Mabini Street
(fronting Victoria Supermart) Baguio City
Tel. Nos. 444-6520, (074) 304-2611
Cellphone No. (0918) 290-0175
Batangas City
Mr. Romeo Clarin c/o Ms. Wilma C. Dayrit
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Batangas City
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Bulacan
Mr. Manolo Mipa
Fausta Village, Tabang [illegible], Bulacan
Telefax (044) 930-1714 EasyCall 141-267294
Mr. Rodolfo D. Gregorio
263 Rizal, Tancar, Baliwag, Bulacan
Tel. No. (044) 766-1250
Office: Care Communications
Baliwag Shopping Center, 2nd Floor [illegible] Building
Barrera St. Poblacion, Baliwag, Bulacan
Cabanatuan City
Mr. Rust Capulo
#7 Santander Street, Kapt. Pepe Subdivision
Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija
Tel. No. (044) 463-0623, E-mail: [illegible]@mozcom.com
City Supermart
Sanggalo Street, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija
Tel. No. (044) 463-1149
Mr. Heyward Pablo
#837 Zulueta Street, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija
Tel. No. (044) 463-2002

Nueva Vizcaya
[illegible] John L. Manzano
Nueva Vizcaya Travel & Tours
Poblacion North Solano, Nueva Vizcaya
Telefax No. (078) 326-7172
Pampanga
Mr. Noel Cabesro
Lot 4 Block 25 Phase II
Corner St. Peter and St. Jude Streets
St. Jude Village, San Fernando, Pampanga
Tel. Nos. (045) 963-3718/(0918) 506-6240
Gopuco Building, Dolores Homesite
McArthur Highway, Dolores, San Fernando, Pampanga
Tel. (045) 961-3787, e-mail: [illegible]@pamp.pworld.net.ph
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Tel. No. (045) 982-0653, Cell No. (0917) 448-0551
Fax No. (045) 982-1755

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Mr. Fernando B. Heredes
Residence: #10 [illegible] Street
[illegible] Pueblo, Dita, Sta. Rosa, Laguna
Tel. Nos. (049) [illegible]
Store: #750 J.P. Rizal Street, Cabuyao, Laguna
Tel. No. (049) 531-4829
Ms. Susan D. Bayley
USC Dita Exchange Co.
55 Paseo de Escudero, San Pablo City
Tel. No. (049) 562-4597, Fax No. (049) 562-1446
Email: [illegible]
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Ms. Alice Pua Uy
Lousa Store, Rizal Street, Cauayan, Isabela
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Ms. Carolina Javier
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Tel. No. (078) 682-8652/682-3620
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Cathy P. Sendin
EM Prieto Marketing
Quezon Avenue, Legaspi City
Tel. No. (052) 214-3042/214-3645/820-3716
Lipa City
Ms. [illegible] c/o Ms. Rose Perez
[illegible] Building, T.M. Kalaw St.
[illegible] 4217 Lipa City
Tel. No. (043) 756-0726/756-1330
Email: [illegible]
Naga City
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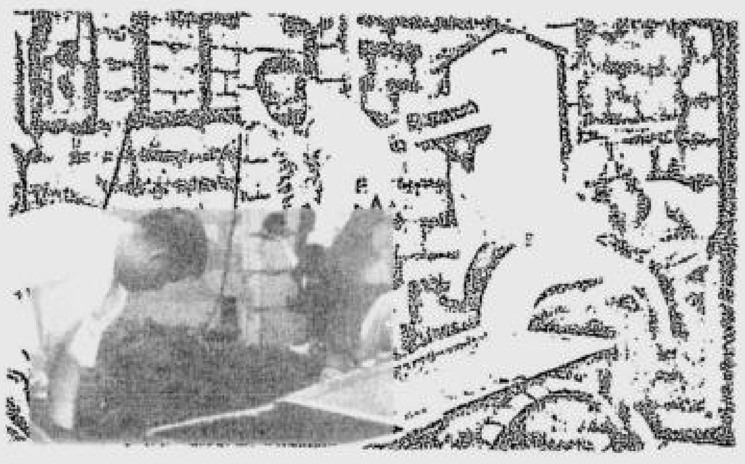
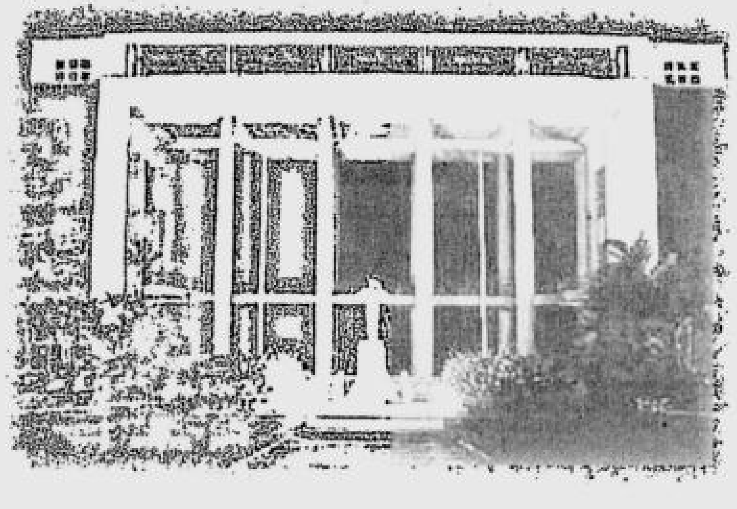


Helping Build Homes and Lives
Zuellig Pharma employees get down and dirty building homes for less fortunate Filipinos under the Habitat for Humanity program. The program constructs affordable housing for low-income families. These houses are constructed by the prospective homeowners with volunteers from sponsoring organizations. Zuellig Pharma and its officers and staff have helped construct two homes in Habitat sites, one in Maragondon, Cavite and the other in Talon, Las Piñas.



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MISSION STATEMENT

Those who have health have hope, and a healthy citizenry is the foundation of a strong and progressive nation. To this end, the Zuellig Foundation will strive:

To be a modernizing force in shaping sound and effective policies in public health and nutrition in the Philippines;

To assist local communities in planning and implementing their responses to health problems, especially health emergencies;

To partner with other organizations and individuals in undertaking medical missions and scientific and medical research on endemic health problems within the country;

To gather and organize vital health information within a national data center which appropriate agencies and individuals can utilize in aid of their own endeavors; and

To support projects and activities that will enhance the social, cultural and economic well-being of the nation, such as the arts and social development programs.

To these labors the Zuellig Foundation will dedicate its time, effort and all resources it can muster from partners, friends and donors who share these goals.

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health have hope.

Providing Doctors for Remote Barangays
Dr. Jocelyn Imbao examines a patient in Abra province. Dr. Imbao was among the first doctors to participate in the Doctors to the Barrios program. Undertaken by the Department of Health, the program provides healthcare to 271 barangays in the country which would otherwise never be visited by a doctor. Zuellig Pharma supports the program by funding the stipend and other financial requirements of the program's physicians like Dr. Imbao.

all began with the trust and support of the Filipino people.

Over the years, we have returned this trust and support by trying our level best to be a good corporate citizen — through various philanthropic and civic projects. As we mark our centenary this year, we are launching today the Zuellig Foundation – to house all these activities and to inaugurate a new expanded program for good corporate citizenship.

By opening this new chapter of service in our operations in the Philippines, we seek to make a real difference in the Philippine health situation and thus contribute to raising the quality of life of the people.

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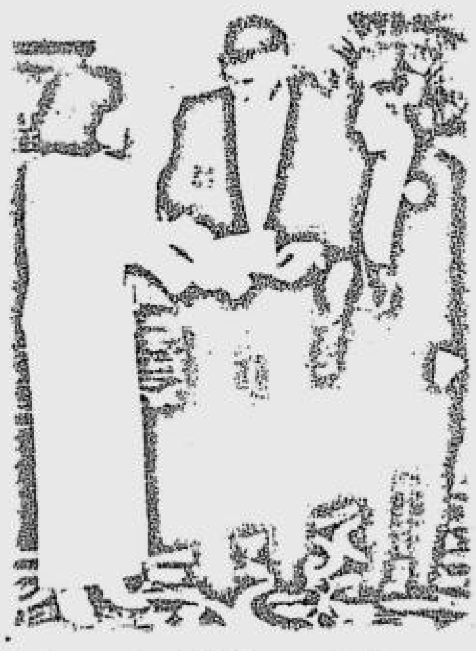

A Reason for Filipinos to Smile
Reiner Gloor, president and CEO of Zuellig Pharma, turns over a company check donation to Congresswoman Edith Villanueva, president of Operation Smile Philippines, and Kathy Magee, Operation Smile International co-founder and president. Operation Smile is a humanitarian organization dedicated to providing free reconstructive surgery to indigent children and young adults with cleft lips, cleft palates and other facial deformities. Zuellig Pharma supports Operation Smile's yearly missions in the Philippines.

FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

The Zuellig Foundation will undertake and support projects falling under four main programs:

❖ **Policy Development and Information Banking**
The foundation will contribute to the shaping international best practice, and the upgrading of outdated health information and statistics in the country. Among the projects are:
- Organization of a Think Tank for Public Health Policy
- Establishment of a national Health Information Bank

❖ **Scientific and Medical Research and Education**
The foundation will support research by individuals or organizations on endemic health problems in the country, and fund a scholarship program and professorial chairs in medical education.

❖ **Community Healthcare Services**
The foundation will assist local communities in their healthcare requirements – including undertaking medical missions, providing medicine, and organizing health emergency relief.

❖ **Social and Cultural Development**
The foundation will support projects designed to enhance socio-economic well-being and promote the development of the arts and culture in the country.

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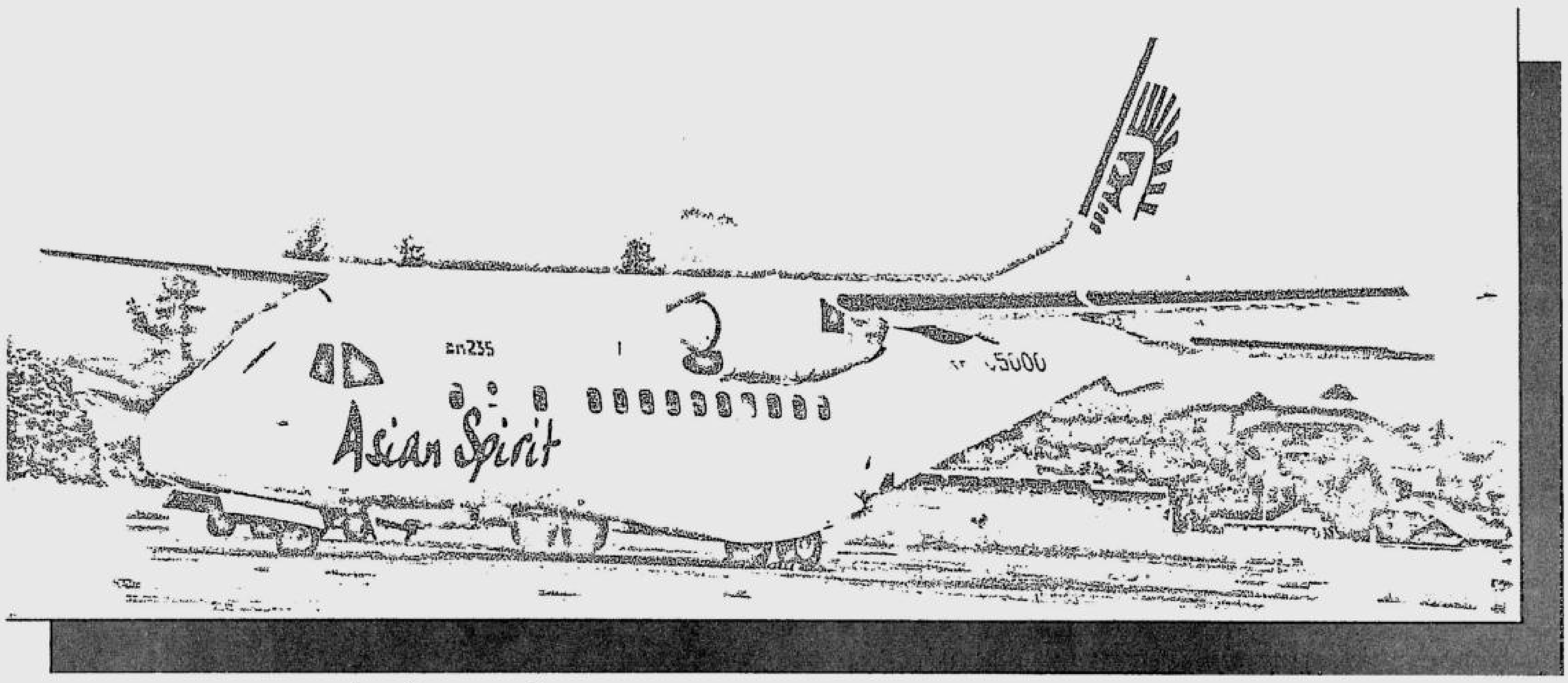

Congratulations on the 5th Anniversary of Asian Spirit, March 29, 2001

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Asian Spirit
THE PEOPLES' AIRLINE

MYLENE DE JESUS, Account Manager
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Congratulations to Asian Spirit on its 5th Anniversary
REPUBLIC BISCUIT CORPORATION
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From: Mr. Rey Medina

Inspired by the aircraft that first flew non-stop across the Atlantic, Asian Spirit carries a similar passion that fueled that historic milestone set by the Spirit of St. Louis

Asian Spirit

Taking off *for* destinations unexpected

BY CHARLES E. BUBAN

"THE Spirit of St. Louis realized a dream that others wouldn't have thought possible at the time. Consequently, journey was shortened as means of interaction improved. Quite similarly, Asian Spirit is pursuing a familiar course," relates Noel Oñate, Asian Spirit board chair.

Now celebrating its fifth year, the country's lone airline company owned and operated as a cooperative renews its commitment to link places not in the regular routes of other airline companies.

"Asian Spirit is very delighted to travel these routes. We see it as a public service to link these confined destinations to the rest of the archipelago. Not only for commercial and industrial progress of the place, I believe we are also promoting them for tourism," explains Jack Po, the airline's Executive Vice President.

Presently, Asian Spirit travels to destinations including *(from and to Manila)* Baguio, Busuanga (Palawan), Calbayog (Samar), Catarman (Northern Samar) Caticlan (gateway to Boracay), Marinduque, Masbate, Naga (Camarines Sur), San Jose (Oriental Mindoro), Tagbilaran (Bohol) and Virac (Catanduanes) and soon to Basco, Batanes. Asian Spirit is also strengthening its Cebu Hub by connecting Cebu to Caticlan, Tagbilaran, Cagayan de Oro and Naga. This year, Asian Spirit will be resuming its flights to Tandag, Sandoval (Palawan), and Surigao.

Huge market

Flights to Caticlan in Boracay constitute perhaps the airline company's biggest market. With seven flights a day, Asian Spirit has the gateway to Boracay. No wonder in that destination alone, Asian Spirit flies over 600 passengers in and out of Boracay everyday. And for this particular route, there are no peak or lean months to speak of.

"While other airlines still have to go to Kalibo—still almost two hours away from Caticlan going to Boracay—we land in Caticlan that shortens the trip. The airport there is only good for the type of aircraft that we fly in, so other airline companies have no choice but to land in Kalibo," reveals Po.

> *With plans to operate in Basco (Batanes) and resume flights to Tawi Tawi and Jolo, Asian Spirit will indeed be serving both the northernmost and southernmost tip of the Philippine Islands*

The size and technology of various airports in the countryside is the primary reason for Asian Spirit's presence and growth. "It is a fact that airports in the countryside are small and lack the necessary infrastructure to accommodate bigger jet-engine aircraft. Since most airlines would just skip these routes, we took it upon ourselves to fill in the vacuum. We believe that no matter how small or isolated your place is, it still needs to be connected to the rest of the archipelago," explains Oñate.

With smaller aircraft in its fleet, Asian Spirit can land its planes safely on shorter airstrips. Its current fleet includes five 60-seater YS 11s, two 47-seater De Havilland DHC-7s, two 19-seater LET-410s and two 40-seater CN235s (the third CN235 is scheduled to arrive in three months time), the latest among their acquisitions *(see photo above)*.

This is why Asian Spirit will be opening a flight to Basco, Batanes this year. Batanes, a beautiful group of islands at the northern tip of Luzon, is perhaps the most isolated among the country's provinces. There are no direct flights or sea routes going to the province. "Yet, that place has a huge potential in becoming the next tourist destination and we want to be there when that happens," hopes Oñate.

Tandag in Surigao del Sur is another destination Asian Spirit will be opening soon. This will beef up the airline company's Cebu hub. "In fact, we have two hubs in the south: apart from Cebu we had the Zamboanga Hub which serves Tawi-Tawi, Jolo and Cotabato. We were the only one operating in these areas during the height of the crisis in Mindanao. It was suspended due to the all out war policy of the previous government and we are just waiting for the outcome of the (government) negotiations before we resume flights," reports Rodolfo Garcia, the airline company's airport services manager. With its plans to operate Basco and resume flights to Tawi Tawi and Jolo, Asian Spirit will indeed be serving both the northernmost and southernmost tip of the Philippine Islands.

Photos by BETOY JOHNSON

BEING a close knit organization, the Asian Spirit family is able to face challenge after challenge. Shown in photo are the airline company's Board of Directors (from left) Reynaldo Rodriguez, Noel Oñate, Antonio Turalba Jr., Cornelio Maninang, Capt. Antonio Buendia Jr., and Joaquin Po.

At present Asian Spirit services 14 destinations that are not being serviced by the other carriers. "We practically service half of the Philippine destinations and the other half being flown by the other three major carriers combined," adds Garcia.

Indeed, with Asian Spirit's present fleet, the airline has the flexibility of flying wherever they want to. "We have different sizes of aircraft to suit the route and passenger volume," explains Lingling Rodriguez, Asian Spirit Consultant for Sales and Marketing. "But first, we study the viability of the area like the state of existing infrastructure, volume of traffic, and of course the fare, whether it's acceptable and affordable to our intended market. We are proud that by next month we will be flying our one millionth passenger. This year is definitely a milestone for the airline."

A dream realized

Asian Spirit started as a mere idea. Putting up one's own airline business is a dream that practically every professional in the industry would want to consummate someday.

"We weren't sure if this flight of fancy of ours would ever take off," recalls Butch Rodriguez, Asian Spirit Vice President. Then poof! In one of his get-togethers with friends and colleagues, someone hatched the idea and gathered money pledges from the 36 individuals present until it reached a whopping P22 million, on the spot. "We realized this was no longer just a conversation. Of course, the figure would still be not enough to buy you a decent aircraft, but it was enough to start the venture," says Rodriguez.

Why not? They had the experience, the skill, and the expertise. They knew each other and their professional strengths. "We made some analysis and studies, when we decided we could do it, we established the Airline Employees Cooperative and lined up the people who would take charge of the departments," says Rodriguez. "Our dream is finally taking shape."

Originally, the airline was conceived to take advantage of Boracay's huge market. "Who would have thought Asian Spirit would be flying to 14 other destinations?" recalls Rodriguez.

Indeed, the company's growth amazes the people of Asian Spirit. In today's formal blessing of its Ticketing, Sales and Cargo Office on Domestic Road corner Andrews Avenue, Asian Spirit looks forward to an even brighter future. "It is always exciting to run an airline business," says Oñate. "To be a catalyst in economic and tourism development is always a great honor for us."

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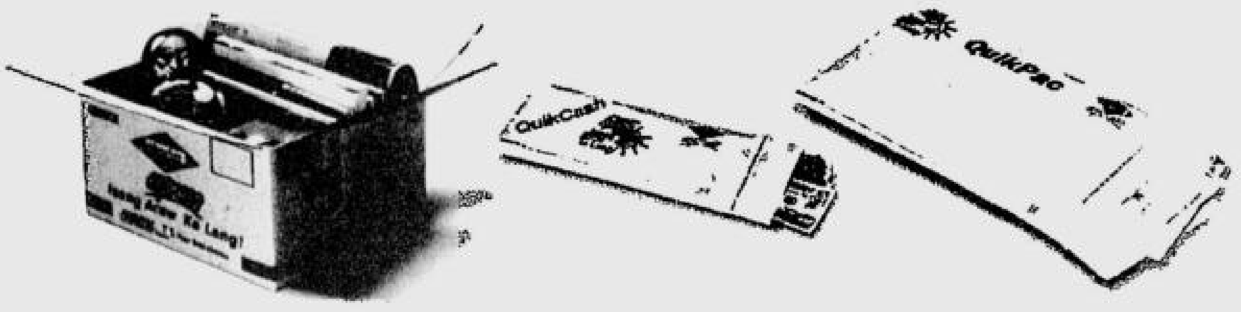

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Ford releases Ranger Trekker 4x2

BY VERNON B. SARNE

TREKKER program manager Colin Thom

HOW do you one-up the competition in the 4x2 pickup segment? For Ford Group Phils., this is a no-brainer. Give the vehicle more engine power and you'll increase your market share as surely as pickups have cargo beds. After all, pickups are workhorses. More than a CD player and leather seats, they need motor muscle and torque.

With this in mind, Ford unveiled last week the Ranger Trekker 4x2, boasting the engine size and vigor as well as the stance of the 4x4 version. Imagine heavyweight power in a lightweight body. With the 2.5-liter turbocharged diesel engine residing under its hood, the Ranger Trekker is now the most powerful among 4x2 compact pickups with 117 horses and 280 Nm of torque.

Ford realizes that many pickup owners who live in the city do not really have need for a four-wheel drivetrain, but desire the power of bigger-engined 4x4 pickups nevertheless. Besides the engine, Ford bestowed the Ranger Trekker with nearly the same mechanicals as the 4x4 to basically give it the same appearance and ride height. Only the 4x4's bull bar and side steps are not found on the Ranger Trekker.

According to Colin Thom, whom FGP brought in last year to specifically work on the Trekker project, the Ranger Trekker has 956 out of 1,016 mechanical parts of the 4x4 Ranger. That's a whopping 94 percent of the total components of the higher-end 4x4.

To increase the height, Thom said they converted the suspension configuration of the 4x2 to that of the 4x4, placing the rear springs on top of the rear axle and adjusting the front knuckles and suspension arms as well as the chassis mountings to achieve an additional height of 4 to 5 inches. The upgrade to 15-inch alloy wheels from the previous 14-inchers also contributes to the improved height.

If you're thinking of a bouncier ride because of the taller height, Thom said the Ranger Trekker offers a much better ride quality than the 4x4 by virtue of a different calibration for the springs and shocks. But while the rear springs of the Ranger Trekker are more comfortable, they boast the same load capacity as those found in the 4x4, claimed Thom.

Ford also introduced a bigger naturally aspirated diesel engine for the 4x2 Ranger. The 2.9-liter diesel motor, which packs 94 horses and 200 Nm of torque, is now available in the 4x2 XLT variant.

The Ford Ranger Trekker XLT 4x2 is priced at P755,000, while the Ranger 2.9 XLT 4x2 goes for P719,000. The XL 4x2 variant with the old 2.5-liter naturally aspirated diesel engine is still available.

FORD Ranger Trekker 4x2

Too many car models

ON THE ROAD
Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

FORD Motor Company is the second biggest automotive manufacturer in the world, yet its Philippine assembly plant produces only two models: the Ford Ranger pickup and the Lynx passenger car. Compare that to Honda, its next-door neighbor in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, which produces four models: the Civic, the City, the Accord and the CR-V.

Why is Ford, which sold 7,220,000 vehicle units worldwide in 1999, holding back its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility here? If you ask Ford Group Philippines president Terry Emrick, he'd tell you that in fact, Ford would like to manufacture only one model in the Philippines and trade it for other models with Thailand and other Asean countries, in sync with the Asean complementation plan.

"There are too many car models in the Philippines for economies of scale," Mr. Emrick told motoring journalists last Thursday prior to a guided tour of the Ford plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. He pointed out that last year, only 83,000 motor vehicles were sold in the Philippines and the Toyota Tamaraw Revo was the top seller with 12,466 units. "You need to sell 200,000 units of the same model from the same plant to be globally competitive," he said, adding that the Philippine auto industry is lagging behind other Southeast Asian countries because of its small market (ranked No. 31 in sales volume in the world), lack of economies of scale, non-export of CBU and CKD kits and negative trade balance.

Mr. Emrick pushed Ford Group Philippines' revolutionary idea to help overturn the automotive trade imbalance which, in 2000, resulted in the Philippines importing P13 billion worth of automotive components and exporting only P6 billion of the same. Also last year, the Philippines exported only 94 vehicle units (CBUs and CKDs) while Indonesia, despite its political turmoil, exported 47,000 vehicles (Toyota Kijang, known as the Revo Tamaraw here) to Taiwan; Thailand exported 141,436 vehicles and Malaysia exported 12,600 vehicle units.

Ford has proven in Thailand that a Southeast Asian country can build cars for export all over the world, Mr. Emrick said. On the other hand, "more imports than exports shows that the Philippine auto industry hasn't developed. It means that jobs are outside the country rather than inside."

The stagnation of the auto industry undoubtedly contributed to the unemployment rate of 11.4 percent last year. Government statistics show that of the 31.7 million labor force of the Philippines in 2000, 3.6 million were unemployed, 5.4 million were underemployed and 5.0 million were working overseas. That adds up to a staggering 14 million out of 31.7 million, or a 44 percent underemployment rate.

Ford created thousands of jobs when it reentered the country in 1998 with a US$200 million (P4 billion) initial direct investment to establish an integrated automotive plant. But more importantly, Ford promised to use the Philippines as an auto component export base to strengthen the auto industry, help prepare the latter for trade liberalization and Afta (Asean Free Trade Area) and thereby help overcome the auto industry's import dependency that accounts for over 20 percent of the country's total trade deficit.

Ford Group Philippines has kept its promise to export more than import auto components by providing increased access to Ford's global supply base, Mr. Emrick said. In 2000, Ford exported US$300 million of auto components from the Philippines for Ford use around the world and imported only $50 million worth. In addition, starting in January 2000, Ford Philippines exported a total of 3,200 1.6-liter engines to Thailand. Mr. Emrick revealed that every wiring set in the Jaguar (the luxury British marque that Ford acquired in 1989) comes from the Philippines. "Would Ford buy those sets if they weren't of the best quality? The Ford Lynx assembled here is of better quality than those made in Japan. The rear springs of the Ford Ranger Trekker were developed here and are exported to South Africa. Quality is not the problem. It's resistance to free trade," he said.

Free trade is what Afta is all about, since it will cut tariffs on cars and most products to 5 percent or even zero by the year 2003. Mr. Emrick sees participation in Afta with global auto manufacturers like Ford as the way for the Philippine auto industry to fast-track its export capability and thus generate more jobs to help lift the country from its economic malaise. But protectionist sentiment has moved the Philippines to defer Afta's tariff cuts to 2004.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Lottery: a tax on people who are bad at math.

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CARS that are hot off the production line and packed with modern features or restored to a contemporary finish are the main attractions at the country's much-awaited motoring show, Trans Sport Show 2001. The premier car exhibition-cum-competition unfolds on April 21 at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall, Building B, Ortigas Center, Edsa, Mandaluyong City.

Always sparking the interest of car connoisseurs, restorers and the public at large, Trans Sport Show this year carries the theme "Focus on Retro Designs," highlighting the best restored vintage, classic and contemporary cars that will vie for top honors in various categories.

Signing up as the "Official Automotive Refinish Paint for Trans Sport Show 2001" is BASF Coatings Inc., one of the gold sponsors of the prestigious nine-day motoring event.

Trans Sport Show 2001 is being presented by Caltex Havoline Energy, with Siemens as platinum sponsor, and R-M Diamont, Formula 1 and Dayco as gold sponsors.

Major sponsors include Outlast Super Premium Battery, Sunrise Holiday Concepts, Daktronics, Digital Resource Corp. and Infobahn Communications Inc. Other sponsors are Pharmaton, 105.1 Crossover, BMB Karaoke Super Band, Pioneer, 89.9 dwTM, 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite, and 88.3 Citylite.

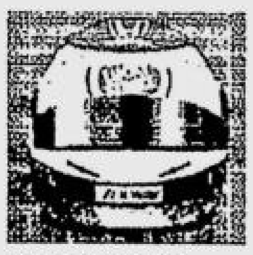
Transhow & BAS ngs.
Contract g
01 uary 2001.BAS te H
SHOWN are Marcelino Quismundo, president of BASF Coatings, and Sophie delos Santos, president of TSI.

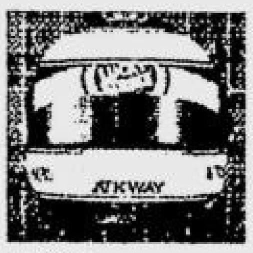
Honda gives away racing items

HONDA Cars Philippines Inc. is inviting everyone to watch the BAR Honda and Jordan Honda compete in the Formula One championship series at the National Sports Grill every qualifying and race day and get a chance to win genuine Honda Racing items.

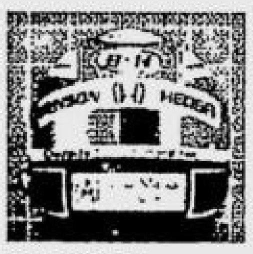
Raffle draws are scheduled on April 1, 2, 14, 15, 28 and 29 at 1 p.m. and 8 p.m. National Sports Grill is located at the third floor of Greenbelt Mall, Ayala Center, Makati City.

Also, Honda Racing is set to give away original helmets of Jacques Villeneuve and Oliver Panis of BAR Honda, Heinz-Herald Frentzen and Jarno Trulli of Jordan Honda in a free draw online. Log on to www.hondaf1.com and be the lucky winner who will join Honda as a VIP guest in one venue of the 2001 Grand Prix.


VILLENEUVE



PANIS


FRENTZEN

BMW SET TO DOMINATE ULTRALUXURY SEGMENT
With the steady return of investor confidence in the Philippine economy, BMW is set to once again dominate the ultraluxury passenger car segment of the local automotive market. The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) statistics show that sales of the Bavarian carmaker's sedans more than doubled in February 2001, bringing the yearly total to more than double the sales of the closest rival in its class. Since the launch of the brand in the Philippines in 1995, BMW has virtually dominated its market segment (luxury vehicles priced P1.0 million and up) with a total of nearly 3,000 vehicles sold to date.

Driving dos and don'ts

THERE are good drivers and there are bad drivers. Good drivers take the proper technique and attitude toward driving while bad drivers don't. Does being a good driver mean honking your horn every time you cross an intersection and never cutting lanes? Does it mean you've got to master the three-point turn or your ability to back up 100 feet in a straight line? Maybe but sometimes, all it takes to be a good driver is not doing anything else—just drive! Here are some driving dos and don'ts from the MUST 2001 handbook:

- Never eat, read, send text messages or talk on the phone while driving. You only have one-fourth of a second to respond to accident situations. That's why it's always good to anticipate and prepare for any eventuality. Being alert and focused can spell the difference between life and death.
- Driving requires looking at the road and the other cars on it. When heading toward an intersection, it is important to slow down and check both ways. See if there are other cars coming before moving on. While this time-consuming process may mean that you'll arrive at your destination 5 seconds later, it is well worth the wait.
- Always use your turn signal when making a turn. Instead of randomly stopping your car and swerving into a mall or switching lanes, the signal should be applied well in advance to allow other drivers to know of your intentions. This helps prevent nuisances like head-on collisions as well as being rear-ended. Road humps means "slow down," not "stop." When approaching a road bump, for the sake of your car and your passengers, do slow down. A road hump is not an invitation to stop. This is the job of a stop sign only.
- When sitting at a stoplight, please pay attention to the light. Do not become engrossed in your morning paper while waiting for it to change. The light will not last long enough for you to finish that paragraph. A stoplight can be a good time to readjust mirrors, change the radio station or even adjust the seat. Do not attempt to read the whole opinion page.
- Practice the elements of defensive driving. Keep your car in a safe steering path. Make sure your total field of vision includes everything from sidewalk to sidewalk. Never fix your gaze on one single object. And always leave enough space between you and the car ahead of you.

Why Butch didn't do 'Jailhouse Rock'

FULL TANK
Al S. Mendoza

ROAD crimes at times happen when we become too trusting, when we become gullible.

I say this because recently, women drivers have fallen victims to holdupmen, if not car thieves, or even rapists and murderers.

The old style still works: A man would wave a woman driver to pull over, motioning the would-be victim that one of her tires was flat, or something was sparking underneath her car.

Once the woman driver buys the fakery, boom, she either gets robbed or loses her car to the man. Both could even happen to her. If the woman gets totally rattled, she could even be kidnapped and, God forbid, raped. She could get killed after putting up a fight.

* * *

Some are aboard a car, or cars.

A car would bump your car. Once you disembarked, boom, you would be the next victim.

Two cars would sometimes sandwich you. They bump you, scare you with a near-swipe. They force you to disembark by trying to get your goat. Once you disembarked, boom, you would be the next victim.

* * *

The trick is to ignore anyone trying to flag you down. Sometimes, including cops or MMDA men. They could be impostors.

Never pay any attention to someone saying your tire is flat. Or that something's wrong with your car.

Proceed but with caution. Next, drive to the next gas station. Or to a restaurant or hotel, or a pay-parking lot. Any place where there are people. Then check your tire, the chassis. Chances are your car is in top shape.

Crimes happen if we allow them to happen.

One more thing: Use your cell phone. Call a relative, a friend, immediately the minute you sense that a crime is in the offing.

Also, if you can, make it a habit to have someone for company when you are driving, especially at night.

As we love to say, prevention is better than the cure.

* * *

Now, to that promise I made here last week: The saga that is Formula One.

First, a trivia: Do you know that world champion Michael Schumacher gets paid $40 million a year driving a Formula One for Ferrari? After winning the 2000 season, his net worth rose to $59 million to become last year's richest athlete, richer than golfer Tiger Woods, cager Michael Jordan and boxer MikeTyson.

Actually, Formula One drivers are among the highest, if not the highest, paid athletes of all time.

Honda's Heinz-Harald Frentzen, who finished a respectable fourth in the Malaysian Grand Prix at Sepang International Circuit in Kuala Lumpur, last March 18, gets almost $15 million a year. His teammate, Jarno Trulli, earns $10 million.

* * *

Why do they get that much?

Well, first, they risk life and limb each time they race, whether it's a practice run or not.

Second, they have that skill and talent to race cars.

Formula One is not just speed (an average of 210 kph per race, it could get faster depending on the weather and track conditions), it is also the skill, the uncanny ability to protect your car from destruction. One major collision could cost the car owner, the sponsors, no less than a million dollars.

A Honda engine alone costs no less than $500,000. With four engines running in the 2001 Formula One season, Honda has the most investments, engine-wise, among all 11 competitors this year. For, aside from Jordan (Eddie), Honda also has partnered with BAR (British American Racing) in the 2001 F1 season.

* * *

During a meeting in Kuala Lumpur with Kazuo Nishizawa and Takeo Fukui, Honda's lead men in Formula One operations, they were asked why Honda was always willing to spend millions of dollars for racing engines when, in reality, they get nothing in return—money-wise.

The answer was startling: "The Formula One is for our young engineers."

Elaborating, Fukui, president and senior managing director of Honda Racing Development of Japan, said: "We always deploy young engineers to tinker with Formula One engines because these young engineers are the future of Honda."

Here's a glass to that.

Nishizawa, technical director of Honda Racing Development Japan, nodded in agreement. Said he: "The experience our young engineers get from Formula One engines automatically translates to street cars getting the same quality as the engines of race cars."

I can believe that.

Look, Formula One cars have the best-engineered engines in the world. In the Italian Grand Prix of 30 years ago at the Monza Circuit, Peter Gethin had an average speed of 242.615 kph. That stands as the highest average speed in Formula One history. And that happened in 1971 yet! If the original Monza Circuit had not been renovated, the average speed would go beyond 300 kph this year!

Anyway, this year's Monza Grand Prix of the 17-leg season will be held on Sept. 16. I look forward to seeing that as that one will be followed by the Indianapolis 500 on Sept. 30, the penultimate leg.

* * *

Definitely, the main feature of Formula One races is speed. In 1998, the fastest Grand Prix was again the Italian, won by Michael Schumacher at an average speed of 237.591 kph. The highest recorded speed during practice in 1998 was 244.413 kph, which was set at Monza again by Eddie Irvine. During the 1998 German Grand Prix, David Coulthard recorded the highest straight line speed at 356.5 kph!

Why am I citing these figures?

Well, in Formula One, cars are not driven to run. They are driven to fly.

* * *

Butch Gamboa, that dapper-looking TV man of "Motoring Today," did not sing during Honda's "Thank You" party in Kuala Lumpur despite insistent demand from Tin Tin Reyes, Ron de los Reyes, Pinky Colmenares, Arnel Doria and Jenny Bleza. No, Butch wasn't acting KJ. He really wasn't feeling well that night.

But Ron, Butch's friendly rival from "Auto Motion," more than made up for Butch's inability to sing. Ron's "Strangers in the Night" piece drew a warm applause from even the Thai and Indon journalists.

Oops, before I forget, Arnel D unleashed a hidden talent that night: He could sing. He did the Eagles' "Hotel California" and the band's lead guitarist that night really lapped it up when he did the song's solo lead guitar.

Here's a glass to Arnel.

But, hey, Butch was just joking when he wrote in his column last week that I changed some lyrics of the Beatles' "I Saw Her Standing There."

No, I did not change "I never danced with another" to "I never danced with your mother" when I did that Beatles hit.

I will never desecrate the Beatles, otherwise I will incur the ire of my buddy, Vernon Sarne, a certified Beatlemaniac like me.

Nice try, Butch.

But aside from having been a little ill, Butch (Pssst! This is a secret) did not have the Elvis Loop in his hair that night. Thus, it would not have been appropriate of him doing the "Jailhouse Rock" without the Elvis hairdo. Elvis The Pelvis would surely turn in his grave had Butch done that.

Right, Tin Tin?

* * *

QUOTE ME. Ignore anyone honking his horn at you while you're driving. Minding it might only lead you to trouble.

MOTORING
CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

'GIANT ROLLING COFFINS'

When welded pipes and draglinks can kill

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

(Second of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE AIR compressor of a dump truck bursts. The brakes don't work. The passenger bus careens out of control.

Suddenly, all hell breaks lose. Women, children, infants, every breathing human who stands in the way of a "mad" truck are dragged to a violent, fiery, oftentimes painful, end. Truck drivers, often blamed for accidents involving trucks and buses, are helpless to stop their raging vehicles from inevitable catastrophe.

The "mystery" accidents are most likely attributable to right-hand vehicles (RHDs) haphazardly repositioned into left-hand drive, says a Filipino automotive technologist who refused to be identified.

It would be easy to spot wrong conversions. The wipers and headlights of original RHDs swing from right to left, and the headlight beams are positioned incorrectly (left beam is on high, right beam is on low). These oversights alone have caused many head-on collisions with oncoming motorists and pedestrians being sideswiped from the sidewalk.

It seems this is just the tip of the iceberg. Poorly repositioned vehicles have also been found to have two more defects. These are the unseen, below-the-hood defects that can have even more devastating effects.

Welded pipes

The practice of cutting and welding pipes together has been most common in the process of repositioning. Look at any local *"talyer"* outfitting passenger jeeps, and one gets a clear picture. This, however, is considered as another perfect ingredient for a disaster.

The technologist stressed that almost all involved in the repositioning of trucks and buses are guilty of practicing "brazing." From the automotive technologist's point of view, welding a steel brake pipe to a copper pipe and brazing this with brass is a sure ingredient for an accident. Welding dissimilar metals causes galvanic corrosion. In turn, this would cause the brake pipes and steering to break.

The Philippine government had been well aware of the dangers of corrosion, as cited at the Department of Trade and Industry's Philippine National Standard. It ruled that high-pressure tubes and fittings should conform to the accepted automotive engineering standards and procedures. Part of the basic requirements the PNS set included corrosion precautions. This is "due to galvanic coupling of widely dissimilar metals and alloys when such materials used for tubing, pipe, fittings and attaching parts are in intimate contact with each other."

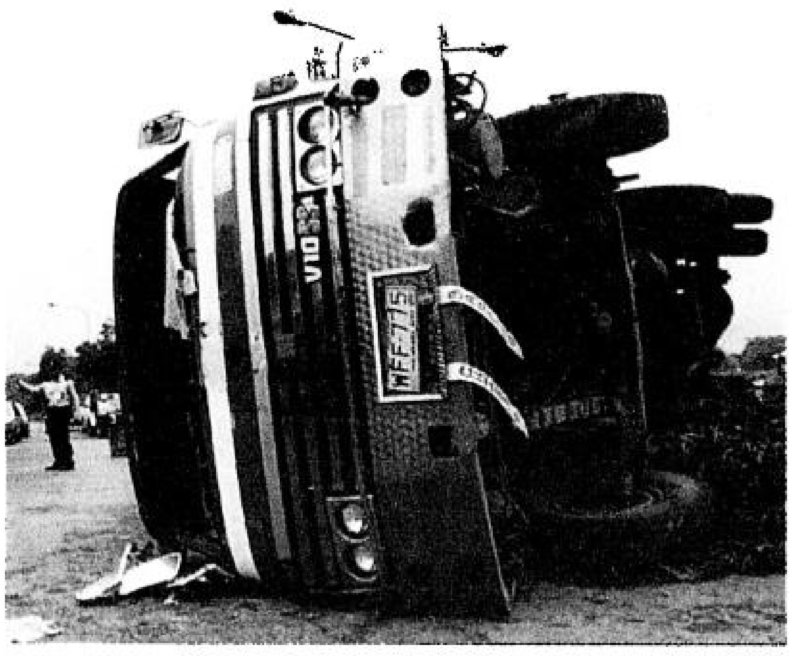
The PNS also required that tubing pipe and fittings should be protected from oxygen concentration cell-type of corrosion. It also cited that where soft nonmetallic cushions are used to prevent metal-to-metal contact between supporting components and the tubing, pipe and fittings, the cushion should be that it would not absorb and retain significant amounts of water.

Draglink

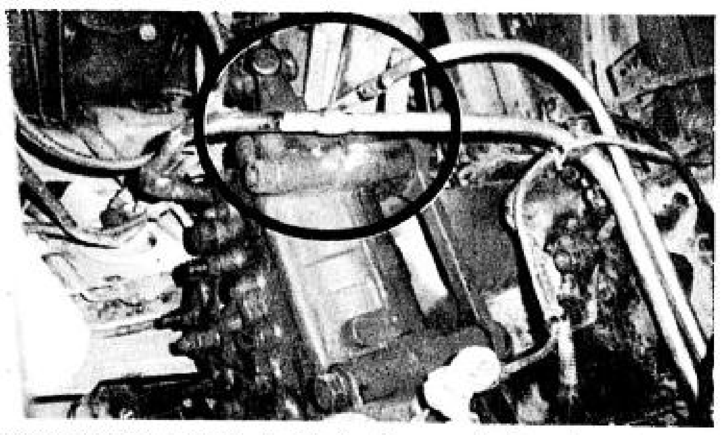
A draglink is another crucial part of the link that connects the steering mechanism to the wheels of the vehicle. The term draglink could sound seemingly insignificant to laymen, but to automotive technologists, it is where lives are wasted when the draglink is not applied correctly.

Due to the change in steering position (from RHD to left-hand drive), the old draglink cannot be used. In the motoring industry, the practice of cutting metal or steel with a blowtorch, and then rewelding them is unacceptable. Manufacturing a draglink is so precise that special machines are needed so that the metal is not annealed during the fusion process. Failure of the component can cause loss of steering control—and a one-way trip to tragedy.

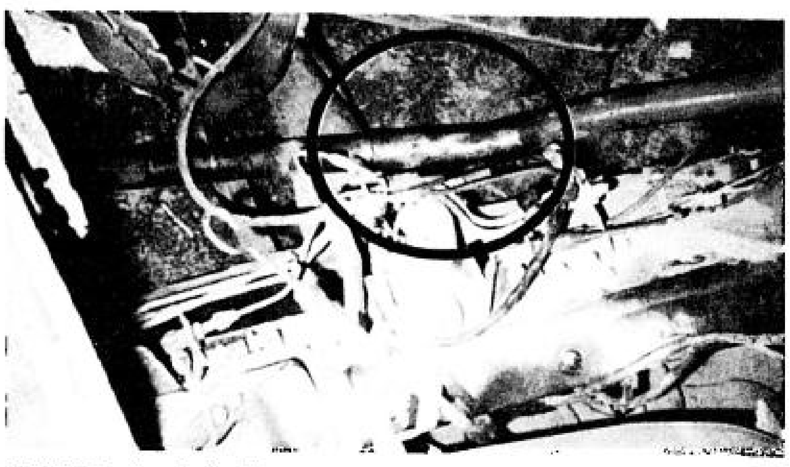
(Next week: Conclusion)



ONE-WAY trip to tragedy. This garbage truck rests on its side after losing control along Commonwealth Philcoa in Quezon City nine months ago. Note: The wipers show the truck is an originally right-hand drive vehicle. (FILE PHOTO)



NONREGULATION brazed (welded) pipes easily break and cause tragic accidents.



WELDED draglink. The practice of cutting with a blowtorch and rewelding is unacceptable in the automotive industry. Failure of a draglink component could cause loss of steering control.

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Vitara Plus	A/T	P167,400	P15,899
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Grand Vitara 2.0L	A/T	P235,000	P22,333
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LIFESTYLE
CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor

Not your usual Chinese greasy spoon

BY CONSTANTINO C. TEJERO
PHOTOS BY BETOY JOHNSON

THE FOUR friends who brought the Chili's franchise to the country five years ago have added another concept restaurant to their expanding business.

With three Chili's outlets in Greenbelt, Greenhills and on Tomas Morato Street going strong with the yuppies, family and business crowds, the group opened on March 12 their Super Bowl of China specifically for the office workers at the Megamall and vicinity.

The apple-green and cherry-pink neon signage visually communicates at once that this is not your usual Chinese greasy spoon. Even the colors on the menu card—violet, beige, orange—are the ones we associate with imperial palaces.

Well, there's the usual noise of the dining crowd. And the exhaust system can still be improved.

The restaurant has a linear design dominated by earth tones, with a huge lamp over the counter, and cream-colored flooring bordered by brown stenciled concrete that looks like faux granite. However, with the space filled with lateral lines, low mahogany-colored furniture, square or rectangular tables, low lighting, and neatly arranged framed reproductions of photographs and prints of Old China, this exudes more of the austere Japanese aesthetics than the gaudier, more elaborate Chinese.

But why another Chinese cuisine restaurant in the overbrimming field?

"One obvious reason is, we all love Chinese food," says Luigi Vera, president of Am-Phil Food Concepts. "We are targeting the *masa* here, which won't be possible if we go for Italian or Japanese food. Besides, Chinese food, next to our native delicacies, is what Filipinos keep coming back to."

Two members of the group, Winston Chan, vice president for operations, and Richmond Yang, corporate secretary and treasurer, are of Chinese parentage. "So we have a benchmark for taste profile," says Chan. "Filipino cuisine, *marami nang magaling d'yan.* Also Italian. Japanese is really not our specialty."

The three friends (classmates at Xavier School before they moved to the United States for college, where they met American Robert Epes, who's now vice president for finance) have varying tastes in food.

Yang's favorite is the pan-fried goose liver of Grassi's. Chan's is pasta in clam sauce with white wine at La Nouva Pastilleria. Vera's is the *kare-kare* and crispy *pata* of Country Spice. But one cuisine over which their taste buds obviously agree is the Chinese (and the Southwestern American, of course).

Textures and flavors

Super Bowl's specialty is Cantonese cuisine, Hong Kong-style. "It is authentic Chinese food in Western portion," says Vera.

Super Bowl here refers to the massive bowl of serving at the restaurant, particularly of topping rice, soup, congee or noodle dish. The portion is that big, that a person with a fairly big appetite would be set back by only an average of P150 to get a full meal, drinks included.

For less than P200, the dim sum combination platter contains two pieces each of *siu lung pao* (steamed meat dumpling), *ham sui kok* (deep-fried meat dumpling), steamed pork *siu mai*, deep-fried *wanton*, deep-fried bean-curd skin roll with chicken, pan-fried Shanghai dumpling.

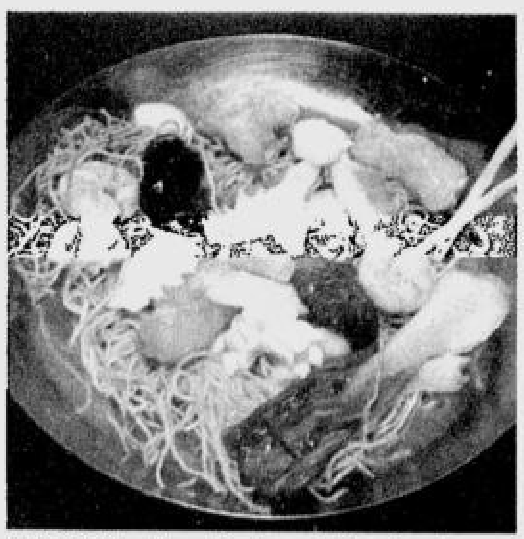
Apparently, the concept is quite a success, because a second Super Bowl outlet is opening on Jupiter Street in Bel-Air, Makati City, on April 18. (That fast.)

Open 10 a.m.-12 a.m., the restaurant has all its 94 seats taken at lunch and dinner, and it gets the *merienda* crowd, too. Turnover of diners is 1.5 at lunch and 2.5 at dinner, or an average of four a day. Chan believes the attraction lies in the food preparation, secret ingredients included.

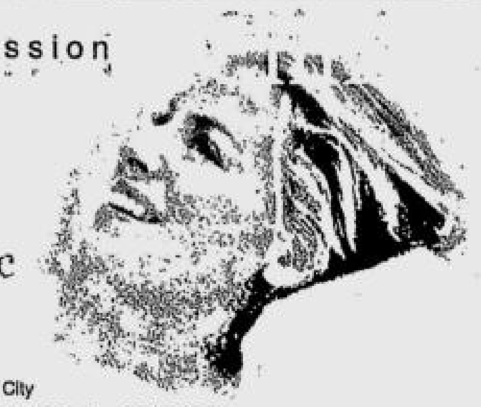
"It is not necessary to invent new dishes," he

NOT/ p.C3

DIM SUM HEAVEN. Good enough for a fairly big appetite



CRISPY Noodles with Assorted Seafood



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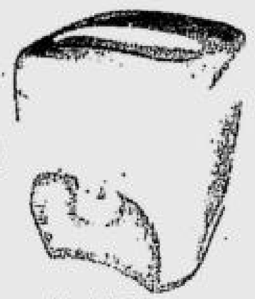

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3. Enter sender's name or send right away. Voice prompt will confirm if message is sent.

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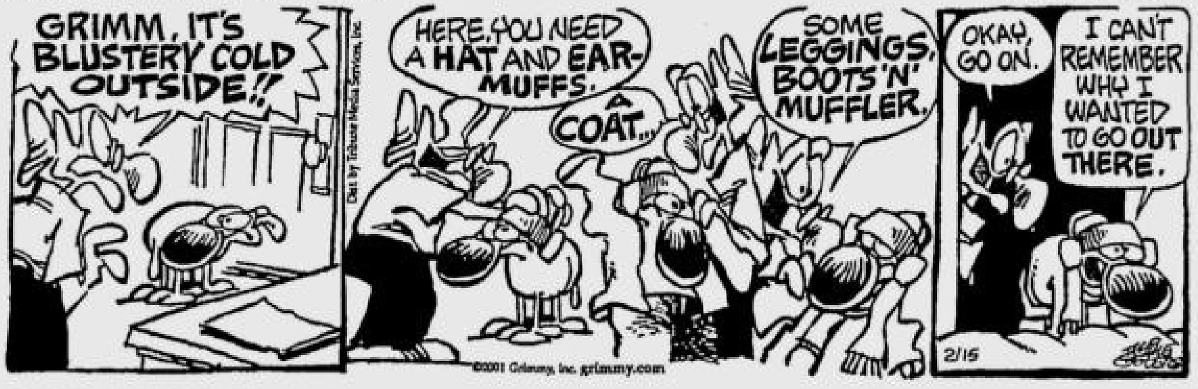
- Dial 135, then 0919-7882135
- Press 4 to listen to the Songs of the Week. Then make your choice.
- Watch SOP JAMMING the following week to find out the most requested song.

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


GRIMM, IT'S BLUSTERY COLD OUTSIDE!!
HERE, YOU NEED A HAT AND EAR-MUFFS.
A COAT...
SOME LEGGINGS, BOOTS 'N' MUFFLER.
OKAY, GO ON.
I CAN'T REMEMBER WHY I WANTED TO GO OUT THERE.
2/15
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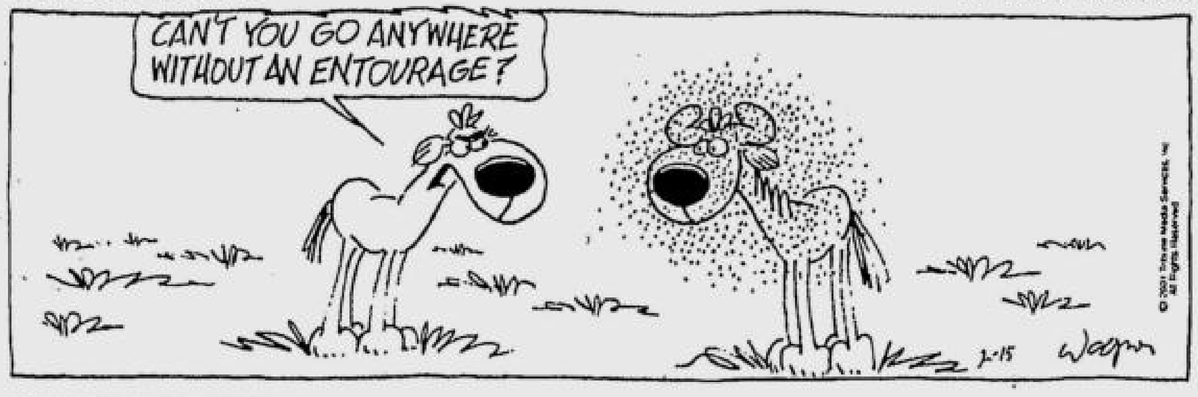
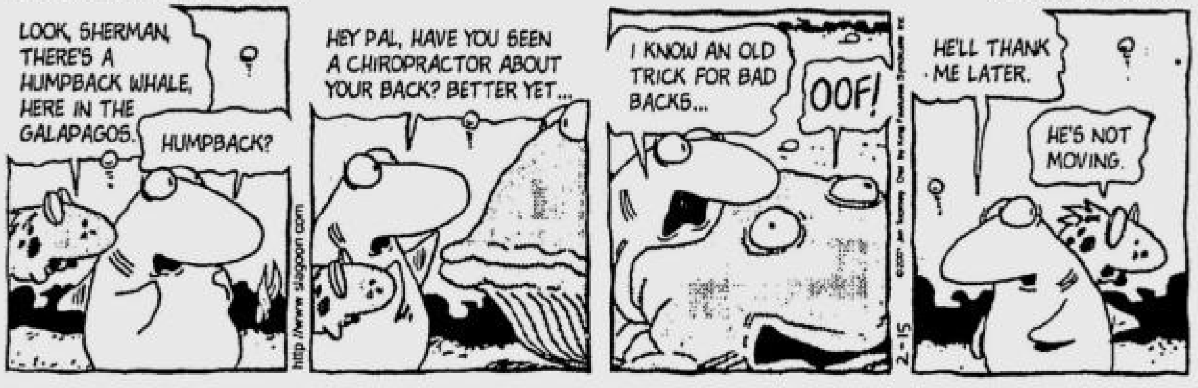
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


CAN'T YOU GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT AN ENTOURAGE?
2-15
Wagner

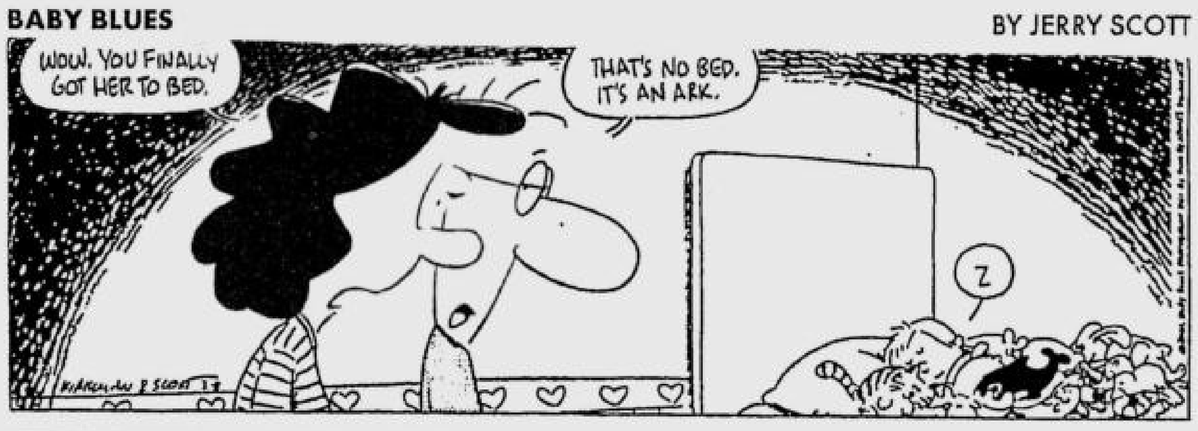
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


LOOK, SHERMAN, THERE'S A HUMPBACK WHALE, HERE IN THE GALAPAGOS.
HUMPBACK?
HEY PAL, HAVE YOU BEEN A CHIROPRACTOR ABOUT YOUR BACK? BETTER YET...
I KNOW AN OLD TRICK FOR BAD BACKS...
OOF!
HE'LL THANK ME LATER.
HE'S NOT MOVING.
http://www.slagoon.com
2-15

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WOW. YOU FINALLY GOT HER TO BED.
THAT'S NO BED. IT'S AN ARK.
Z

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lucy Lawless, Pearl Bailey, Jennifer Capriati, Eric Idle, La Toya Jackson, John Major, Jill Goodacre, Walt Frazier, Marina Sirtis

Happy Birthday: You will have to spread yourself pretty thin this year if you want to take advantage of all the opportunities coming your way. Maybe it's time to set your priorities straight and do a few things exceptionally well instead of many things in a mediocre manner. The choice is yours, but the recognition will be greater if you choose to do less and do it well. Your numbers: 17, 25, 29, 38, 41, 45

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You're looking for love. You need to attend some prestigious functions that will bring you in contact with mates who have more to offer. Your outgoing nature will attract candidates for romance.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't hesitate to take the advice offered by friends and relatives. Their suggestions will be helpful and will also relieve your stress. Don't make unreasonable promises.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Find ways to improve yourself before you criticize those around you. Changes in your home appear to be favorable as long as you allow everyone involved to do things their own way.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Be careful not to reveal secret information. Co-workers may be less than cooperative. It is best not to travel or to present your ideas until a later date.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Make a decision regarding your present partner. Your need to meet new people and spend more time away from home may be due to a lack of mental and emotional stimulation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Let go of the past and be prepared to make changes that will make your life better. Your creative talent should be developed. Take art courses or just spend more time practicing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Mix and mingle with those who can provide you with a little intellectual conversation. You need to get back to your own interests and activities.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Older relatives will be demanding. Take care of their problems quickly and get on with your own business. Don't overspend on renovations or redecorating. Put your cash in a safe place.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You may have a lovers' spat if you have refused to recognize what is bothering your mate. You may need to bend to your partner's needs.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your efforts will be appreciated at work. Jump at any opportunities that arise. You can make career changes and raise your wages if you are willing to make a move.

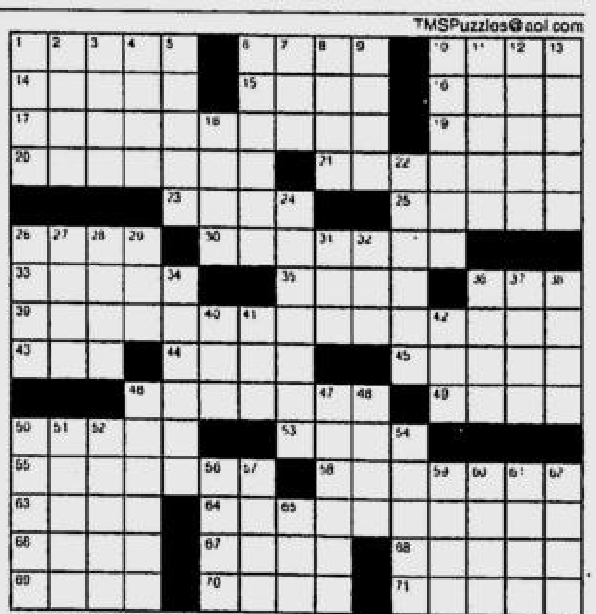
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Entertainment should include the whole family or your friends; you need to do something energetic and different. Plan events that will get the juices flowing.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Idle time will lead to problems at home. Put your energy into home-improvement projects. You need a change to lift your spirits. Don't start anything without your family's approval.

Birthday Baby: You're such a wizard when it comes to accomplishments. Your dreamlike imagination will never let you down as your desire to take the world by storm leads you to glory.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Gregory E. Paul
Scottdale, PA

2/13/01

ACROSS
1 Dustin in "Midnight Cowboy"
6 Soft-toy stuff
10 Overtake
14 Also called
15 Toledo's lake
16 Jai __
17 Tiger's turf
19 Curvaceous cutie
20 By my lowest estimation
21 Timeless
23 Ostrich kin
25 Impoverished
26 Be an omen of
30 Palmer and Toynbee
33 Showplace
35 "Revolutions of the Viaducts" painter
36 Pizza order
39 Ripken's range
43 Wapiti
44 Brogue, e.g.
45 Scope
46 Mariners' home
49 School official
50 "Father Murphy" star
53 Has dinner
55 Bat slickum
58 Arrives at
63 Critic Rex
64 Lemieux's milieu
66 Pulitzer winner, 1958
67 NYC theatrical award
68 Longtime Italian royal family
69 Group of gnus
70 Full calendar
71 Tubby plus

DOWN
1 Hindu music
2 Plenty
3 Cash drawer
4 Out of danger
5 Movie award
6 Neither active nor passive
7 Make a mistake
8 Upslope
9 Leg ends
10 San Diego nine
11 By oneself
12 Dinner course
13 Half-baked
18 Workplace watchdog grp.
22 Make lovable
24 Some socks
26 Movie piglet
27 __ Roberts University
28 Carrel furniture
29 U-turn from WSW
31 On its last legs
32 Fragrant neckwear
34 Part of AWOL
36 Johnnycake
37 Actress Swenson
38 First garden
40 So that's it!
41 Man with a salty wife?
42 Bonkers
46 Ranked at Wimbledon
47 Skulker
48 Fencer's foil
50 Ms. Winfrey
51 Hamlet, to Horatio
52 Scornful smile
54 Authority to decide
56 Nautical greeting
57 Judge's garment
59 Common crustacean
60 Busy abode
61 Adam's grandson
62 Scottish isle
65 OSS successor

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

T	A	R	A	■	C	A	M	P	S	■	M	E	A	L
O	R	A	L	■	U	B	O	A	T	■	A	L	M	A
T	A	M	E	■	S	O	L	D	I	E	R	B	O	Y
E	B	B	■	S	P	U	D	■	F	R	I	A	R	S
■	■	L	I	M	I	T	■	A	L	A	N	■	■	■
G	L	I	D	E	D	■	P	R	E	S	A	G	E	S
R	E	N	E	W	■	C	A	D	R	E	■	Y	A	P
A	R	M	S	■	M	O	P	E	S	■	U	P	T	O
B	O	A	■	R	A	V	E	N	■	O	N	S	E	T
S	I	N	C	E	R	E	R	■	S	A	T	Y	R	S
■	■	■	O	T	I	S	■	T	U	R	O	W	■	■
A	N	N	U	A	L	■	M	E	L	S	■	O	A	R
G	E	O	R	G	Y	G	I	R	L	■	A	M	M	O
E	R	R	S	■	N	O	R	S	E	■	L	A	O	S
S	O	M	E	■	S	T	E	E	N	■	I	N	K	Y

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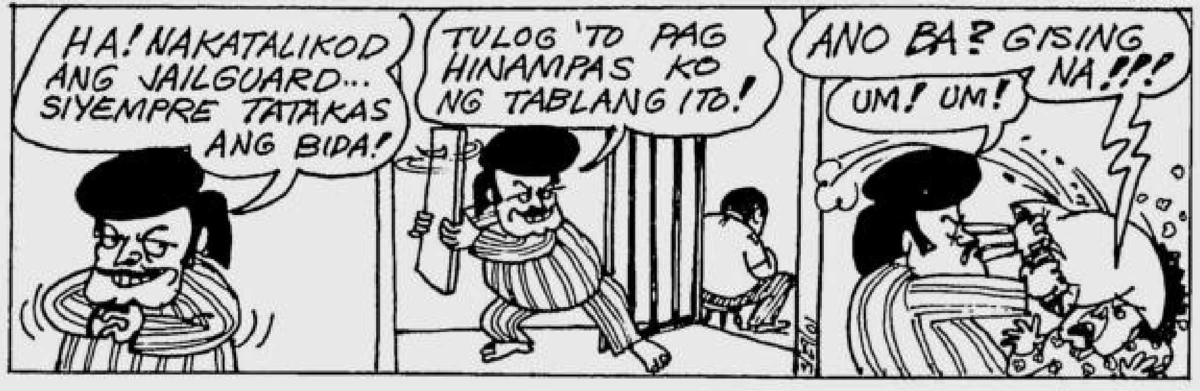
2/13/01

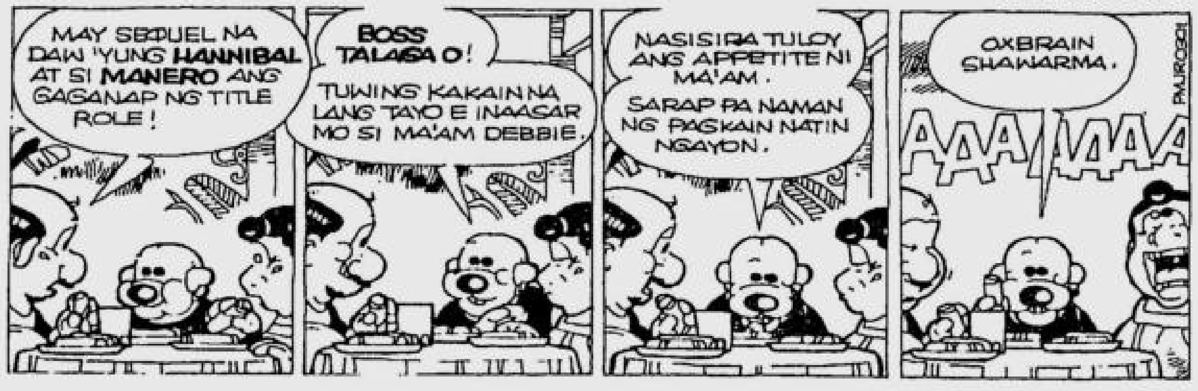
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HA! NAKATALIKOD ANG JAILGUARD... SIYEMPRE TATAKAS ANG BIDA!
TULOG 'TO PAG HINAMPAS KO NG TABLANG ITO!
ANO BA? GISING NA!!!
UM! UM!
3-21-01

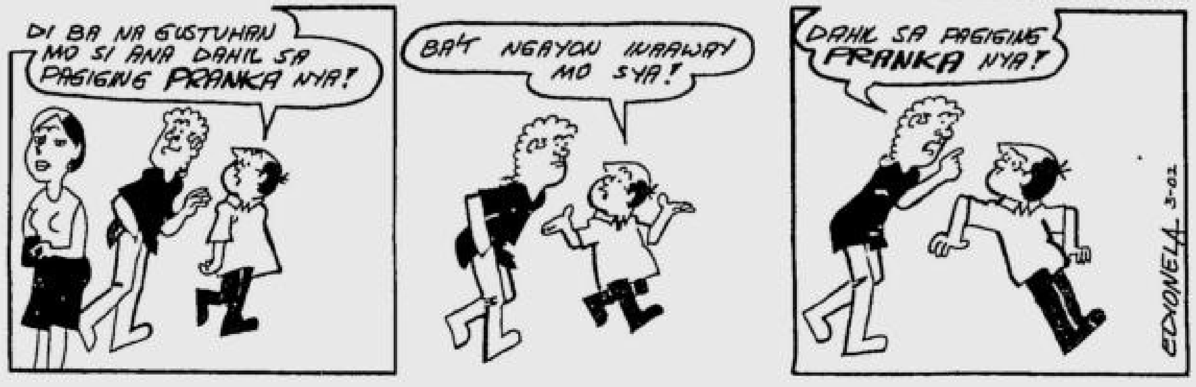
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAY SEQUEL NA DAW 'YUNG HANNIBAL AT SI MANERO ANG GAGANAP NG TITLE ROLE!
BOSS TALAGA O!
TUWING KAKAIN NA LANG TAYO E INAASAR MO SI MA'AM DEBBIE.
NASISIRA TULOY ANG APPETITE NI MA'AM.
SARAP PA NAMAN NG PAGKAIN NATIN NGAYON.
OXBRAIN SHAWARMA.
AAAAAAA
PMJR2001

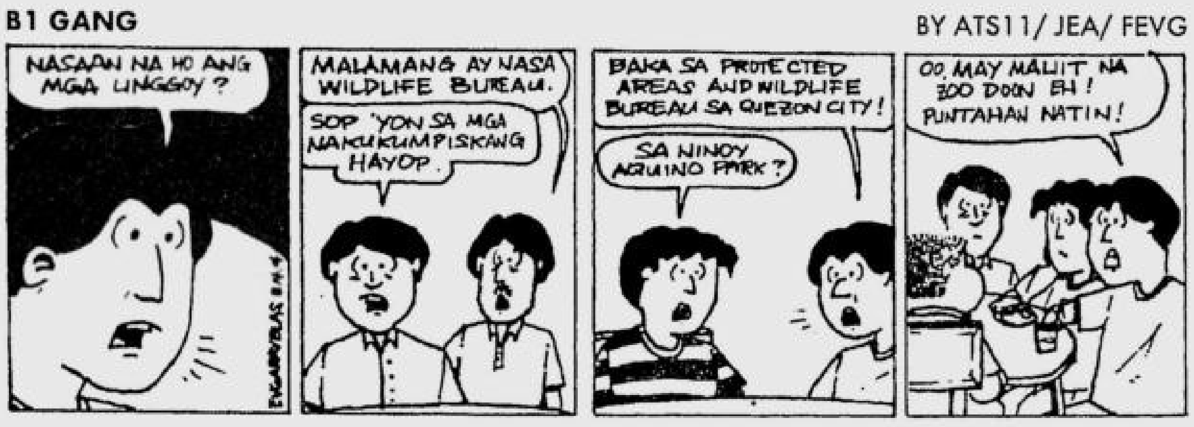
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


DI BA NA GUSTUHAN MO SI ANA DAHIL SA PAGIGING PRANKA NYA!
BA'T NGAYON INAAWAY MO SYA!
DAHIL SA PAGIGING PRANKA NYA!
EDIONELA 3-02

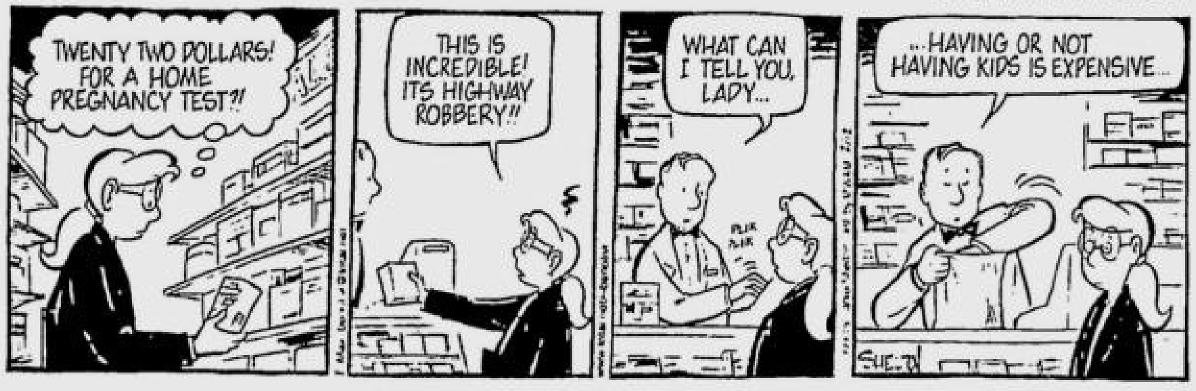
B1 GANG

BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


NASAAN NA HO ANG MGA UNGGOY?
MALAMANG AY NASA WILDLIFE BUREAU.
SOP 'YON SA MGA NAKUKUMPISKANG HAYOP.
BAKA SA PROTECTED AREAS AND WILDLIFE BUREAU SA QUEZON CITY!
SA NINOY AQUINO PARK?
OO, MAY MALIIT NA ZOO DOON EH! PUNTAHAN NATIN!

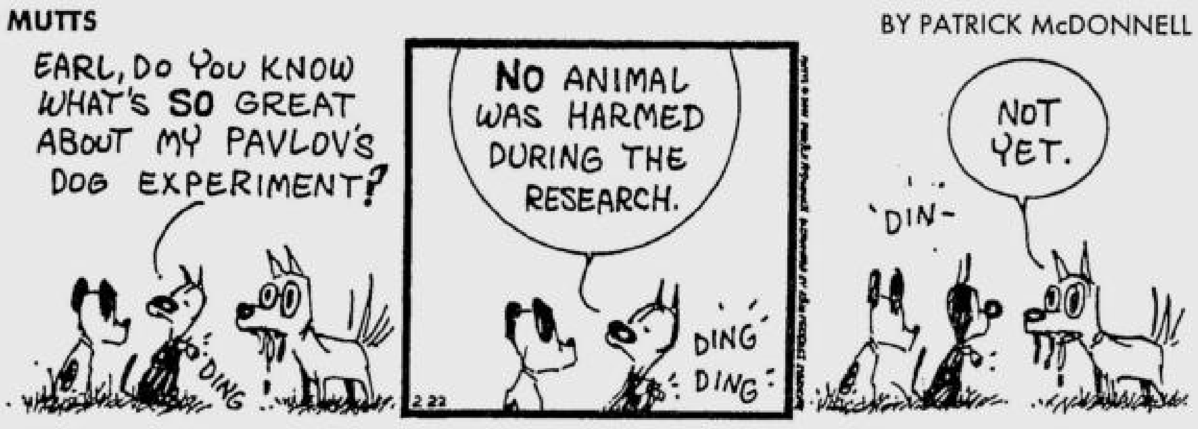
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


TWENTY TWO DOLLARS! FOR A HOME PREGNANCY TEST?!
THIS IS INCREDIBLE! ITS HIGHWAY ROBBERY!!
WHAT CAN I TELL YOU, LADY...
...HAVING OR NOT HAVING KIDS IS EXPENSIVE...

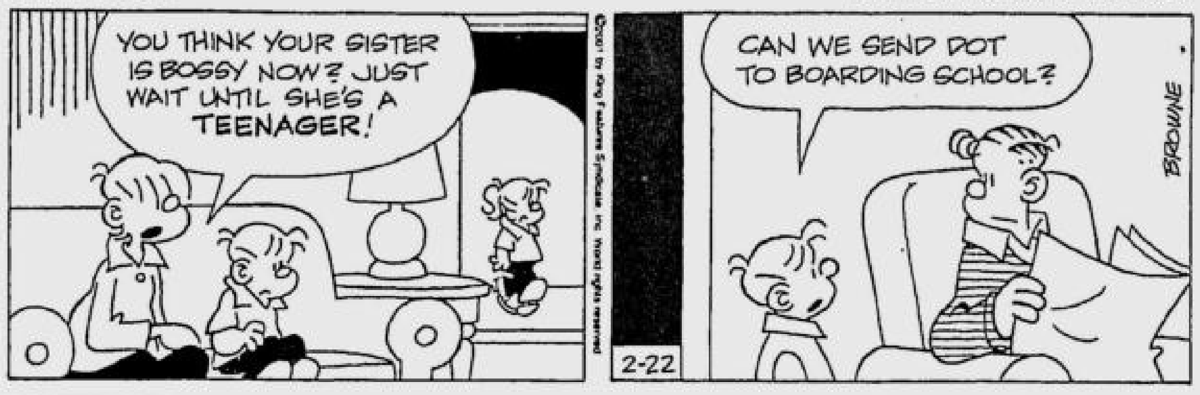
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL, DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT MY PAVLOV'S DOG EXPERIMENT?
DING
NO ANIMAL WAS HARMED DURING THE RESEARCH.
DING DING
2 22
DIN-
NOT YET.

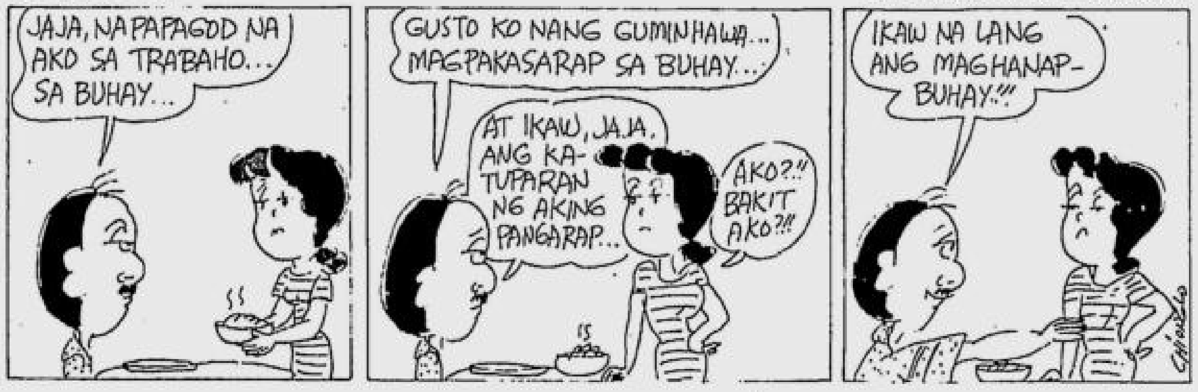
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


YOU THINK YOUR SISTER IS BOSSY NOW? JUST WAIT UNTIL SHE'S A TEENAGER!
2-22
CAN WE SEND DOT TO BOARDING SCHOOL?
BROWNE

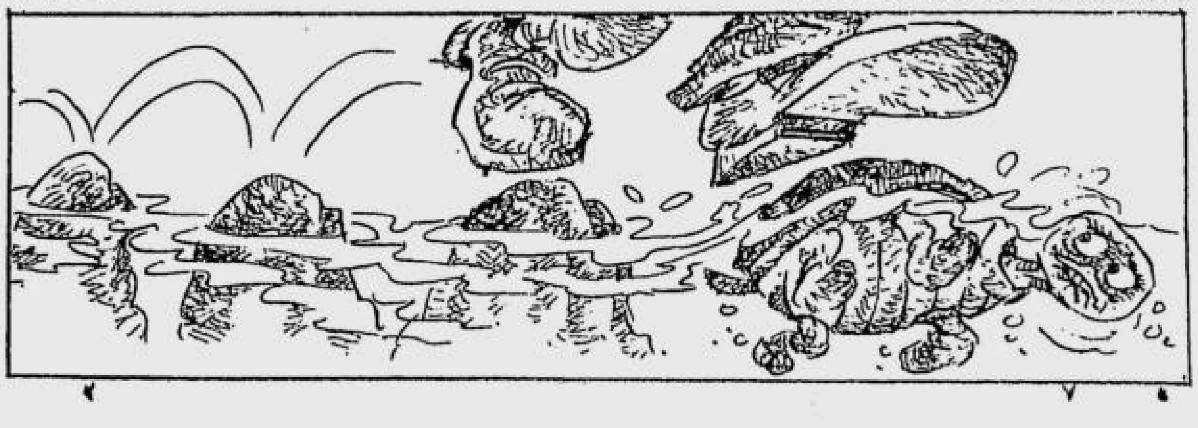
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, NAPAPAGOD NA AKO SA TRABAHO... SA BUHAY...
GUSTO KO NANG GUMINHAWA... MAGPAKASARAP SA BUHAY...
AT IKAW, JAJA, ANG KATUPARAN NG AKING PANGARAP...
AKO?!! BAKIT AKO?!!
IKAW NA LANG ANG MAGHANAP-BUHAY!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING



FOUR friends Richmond Yang, Luigi Vera, Winston Chan and Robert Epes are now out to invade a popular market.

> 'We don't have to reinvent the wheel to introduce Chinese cuisine into the market. We just have to make it better'

Not your usual Chinese greasy spoon

(From page C1)

says. "We don't have to reinvent the wheel to introduce Chinese cuisine into the market. We just have to make it better. The duck is common, but we make a better duck."

And it comes in a platter, in slivers of succulent meat with crispy golden skin surrounded by a tangle of jellyfish. Textures and flavors contrast nicely and attain a subtle balance in the duck skin's crispness and its honey glaze's sweetish hint and in the gelatinous texture and sea-saltiness of the jellyfish.

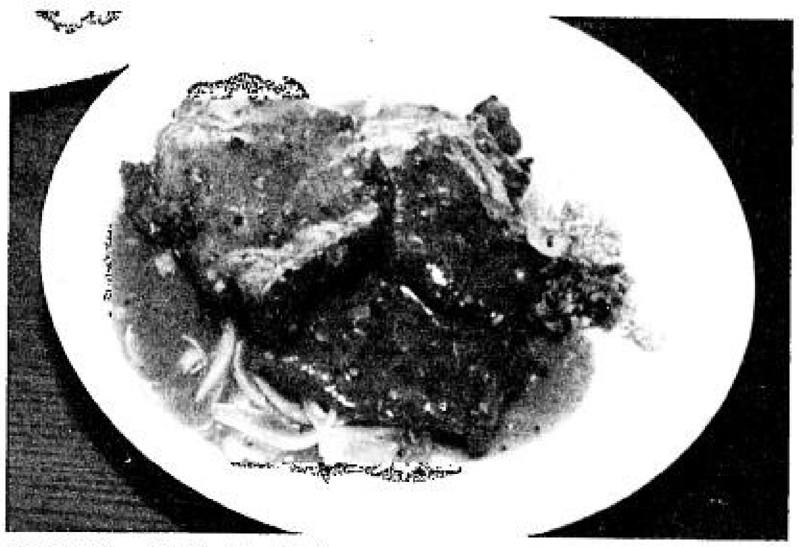
And it's not common at all. In fact, it is imported from Hong Kong. Local ducks are *malansa*, says Chan, since they're being fed with fishmeal.

Their suckling pigs come from Vietnam, and Chan points out that, like their ducks, these are grain-fed creatures. While their beef comes from Batangas, from cattle that, he also points out, graze on grass.

Favorites and bestsellers

It took the group more than a year to come up with this. They started studying the concept in January of last year yet. Chef Law Hung Sao joined them two months later. By August, the business partners signed up with the SM Megamall management for the 180-sq m floor space at the Mega Strip on Julio Vargas Street.

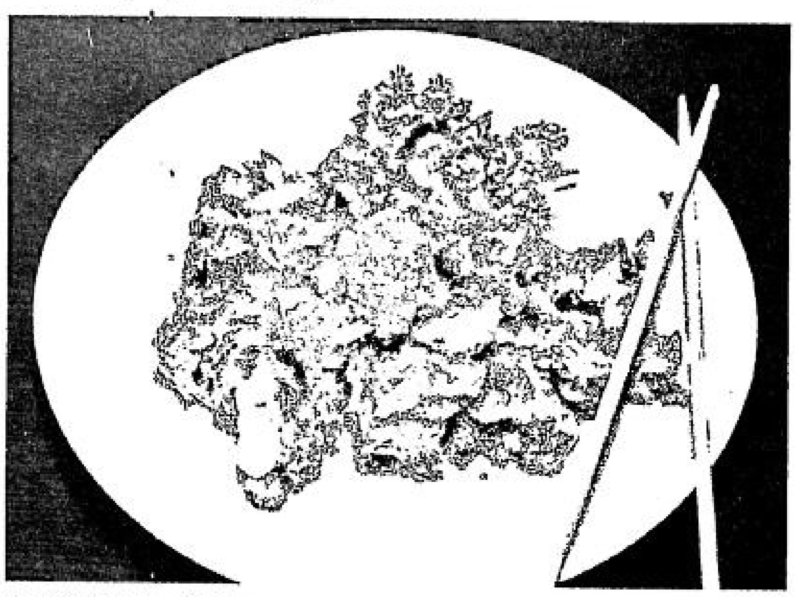
The four friends participated in the food tasting every other week, with an average of five dishes a week, before they could finalize the menu. Super Bowl now offer over 100 items, with eight congees, 15 dim sums, 20 noodle dishes, 25 main dishes, 25 fried rice and toppings.



PORK Chop Big Buddha-Style

Of the steaming-hot rice toppings, the bestseller is Pork Ribs with Tausi Sauce. If you let the rice soak in the sauce for a while before eating, the grains soften and get plumper and the texture becomes that of glutinous rice.

Of the main dishes, the bestseller is Pork Chop Big Buddha-Style. The ingredients in its black peppercorn sauce are supposed to be a trade secret. We can only detect a sweetish taste like coconut cream.

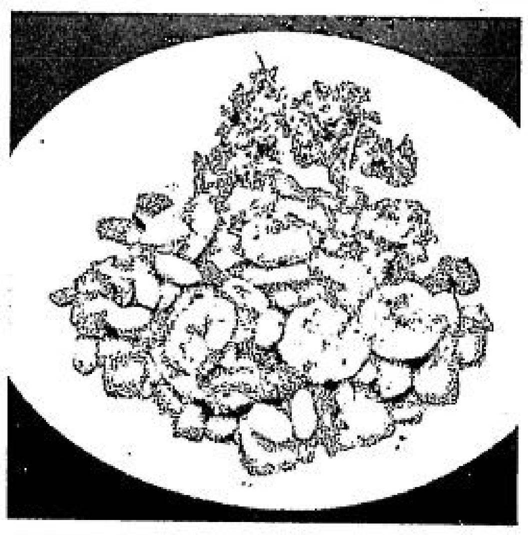


CRISPY Lemon Chicken

Another favorite is Crispy Noodles with Assorted Seafood, which is crab sticks, cuttlefish, shrimps, fish fillet, and succulent slices of sea urchin in thick sauce, on a nest of deep-fried noodles.

Crispy Lemon Chicken comes as small golden chunks of deep-fried breaded chicken studded with sesame seeds and drenched in lemon sauce, which is a little too tart for our taste.

We particularly like the Deep-Fried Spicy Prawns with Garlic. Deveined and butterflied, the prawns ooze with fat. Toasted minced garlic and chili bits enhance the bland flesh of the crustacean. We detect a marinade of rice wine.



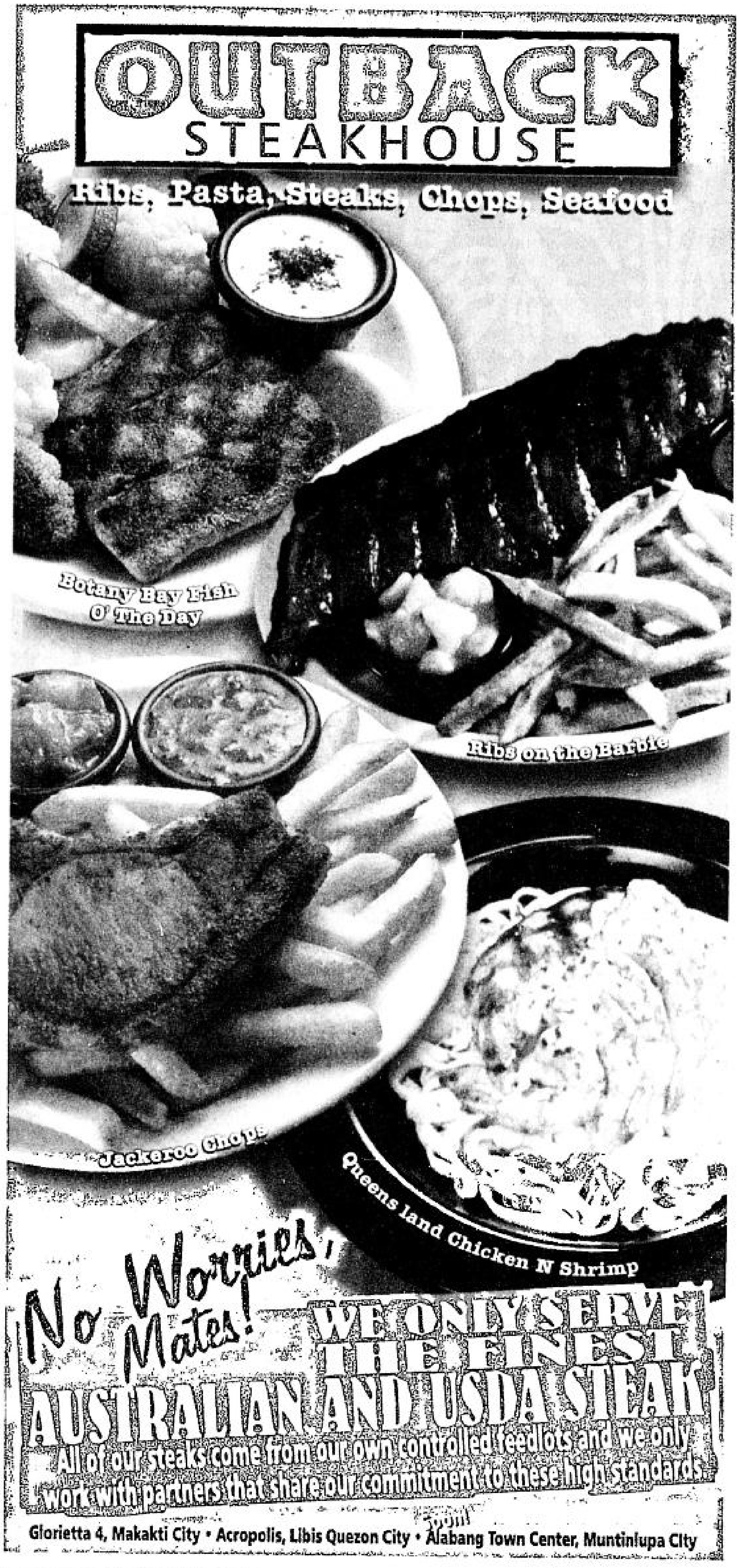
SZECHUAN Prawns

For dessert, the bestseller is Black Rice in Hot Coconut Cream. It is the famous violet rice grown in the uplands, small-grained and glutinous, cooked in sugar, then poured with warm coconut milk in a white ceramic bowl—a perfect *merienda* in itself.

Cap that with a fresh-fruit shake, which isn't your regular concoction served up at a fast-food joint or a stall in the mall. The ripe-mango shake has a plump glistening cherry cleaving to the glass rim. It is a tart yet very sweet ice blast with a swirl of cherry syrup at the bottom of the tall glass.

One sip and all worries of the world disappear. One more sip and you're at the threshold of the Heavenly Gate.

ALMOND Jelly with Mixed Fruits and Hot Coconut Cream with Black Rice



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A chef, a writer and a food designer

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

IT was a lunch encounter to remember. The chef was Rene Michelena, born in Irosin, Sorsogon, who had left for the United States when he was 15, and is back for the first time in 20 years. The writer, Rob McKuen, went to culinary school, worked in restaurant kitchens, but found his true vocation in writing about food for various publications like The Boston Globe, and now Food & Wine and Saveur.

Our hostess, also cook, informant and raconteur, was Pia Lim Castillo, inventor of the mini duck *siopao* (because her father's friend had a feed mill, and ducks to clean it), and a whole line of food products with creative packaging (call 810-7337).

Rene Michelena learned how to cook by reading cookbooks in a library. He has worked at such places as Sign of the Dove and Patina. When he won the Best New Chef in America award, his career took flight. He now has four restaurants in Boston: The Good Life (two of them), a martini lounge that also serves American comfort food (for example the deep-fried turkey of the American south, like Alabama and North Carolina); Centro, an Italian-style *trattoria*; and St. Botolph, which is "a step above the *trattoria*," no red-and-white, but earth-toned tablecloths.

In September he plans to open an Asian restaurant to be called Moondoh. It will certainly have Filipino dishes, and for this he is wandering around Asia. He also returned to be with his family and cook dinner for them, go home to Irosin, and rediscover regional Philippine cooking.

Rob, who has been on the road for three to four weeks, is exploring Filipino food, especially street food, because he believes that there is a low-high development in its evolution; that some high, festive dishes develop from those found in streets and stalls. His academic field was art history, and so now he is concerned with the culture of food, of restaurants, food being "one of the central pursuits of life." He plans to live in Asia for a year, and write a book of essays on food and travel experiences.

Pia Lim Castillo designed for us an all-Filipino menu that started with such appetizers as crisp green mango slices, *kinilaw na tangigue* and *lumpia* filled with *kesong puti*, *tinapa* and *paho*. It was superb. Her cousin, Cheche Lazaro, TV producer, had to leave early, with a pack of *lumpia* for lunch.

Soup was *binacol na manok*, the Ilonggo Visayan soup of chicken cooked in coconut water, ginger, lemon grass and young coconut.

Three layers built the salad: tiny pink peeled shrimps on top, pomelo slices next, and beneath, *camote* tops, the dressing *patis*, *calamansi*, sugar and a whisper of garlic.

The main course was *rellenong bangus* stuffed with water chestnuts—"because I wanted to avoid pork." As a result the family eats mostly fish, with pleasure, and their doctor has asked what kind of a diet has made possible the high percentage of good cholesterol in their meal pattern.

The dessert was served in a tall footed glass, with very pretty layers of cantaloupe and *taho*, *sago* "pearls" floating around and between, and *muscovado* syrup to bind all in sweetness.

There were as well: an excellent *achara* of *nata de coco*, a gift she had received. And whenever Rene or Rob asked a question, out came a sample from the kitchen: *paho* (*Mangifera altissima* Blanco) in the raw, sugared *ensaimada* (which, she explained, was indispensable to Christmas, when it was buttered and sprinkled with *queso de bola*), *pili-muscovado* pralines wrapped in *balibago* leaf.

All this pleasure was set on a deep blue tablecloth with a lemon pattern, bright yellow napkins that Cheche had folded and tied with a sprig of leaves and flowers from her garden, and celadon-green tableware, including a curved multisection *sawsawan* dish, by ceramic artist Lanelle Abueva Fernando.

We explained to Rob how, although we have good restaurants, the best food is found in homes, where creative minds like Pia's work, informed by the occasion, the guests, what is best in the market on that day, and yes, great love.

Markets Rob wanted to know about, and so we explained the new organic food markets like Tesda, and the old seaside fish markets where *bulungan* (whispering bids into the seller's ear) is practiced.

We spoke of *pochero* in Cebu (with corn and bamboo shoots), *budbud kabug* in Dumaguete, *kinilaw* in Bohol, and all concluded that Filipino food and cooking constitute a wide, wide, world largely unknown to those outside the region, and certainly to the West. Even for us it is a treasure awaiting discovery.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

'Chicharron's' irresistible crunchiness

STEP BY STEP

BY VANGIE BAGA-REYES
PHOTOS BY MIKE ALQUINTO

LOVE at first bite.

It may not necessarily apply to falling in love with somebody, but it holds especially true when getting hooked on the lowly *chicharron*.

There's definitely something about *chicharron* which makes it almost like an object of temptation. Maybe it's the sight of its golden, freshly popped skin (the thin layer of meat underneath is a bonus) or the exquisite smell of pork, submerged and slowly cooked in oil. But what completes the package of this irresistible Pinoy fare is that satisfyingly crackling sound—that identifiable noise that always grabs attention—after taking your first bite.

The sound becomes fainter as you nibble away but it doesn't matter, because even before finishing your first hit, you are already contemplating on taking another crack (pun intended).

Okay, after whetting your appetite don't run straight to your neighborhood *chicharron* stand. Just stay at home and we'll teach you how to cook homemade *chicharron*.

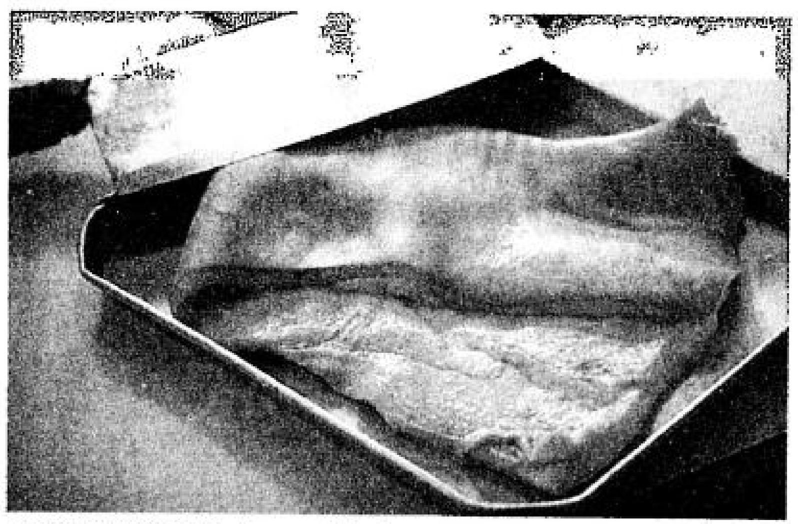
You can never find a recipe for *chicharron* in any book or even in the Internet. So we'll provide you with one which is probably better than those sold commercially. For one, you are assured that the ingredients used are handled well and, secondly, no MSG (monosodium glutamate) is used to season it.

In making *chicharron*, it's a must that you clean the pork rind thoroughly in running water and marinate it in iodized salt to add a bit of flavor. However, the only downside to cooking homemade *chicharron* is it takes up so much fuel. You need to cook *chicharron* continuously for two hours in low fire. You also need to use a huge amount of oil to cook it.

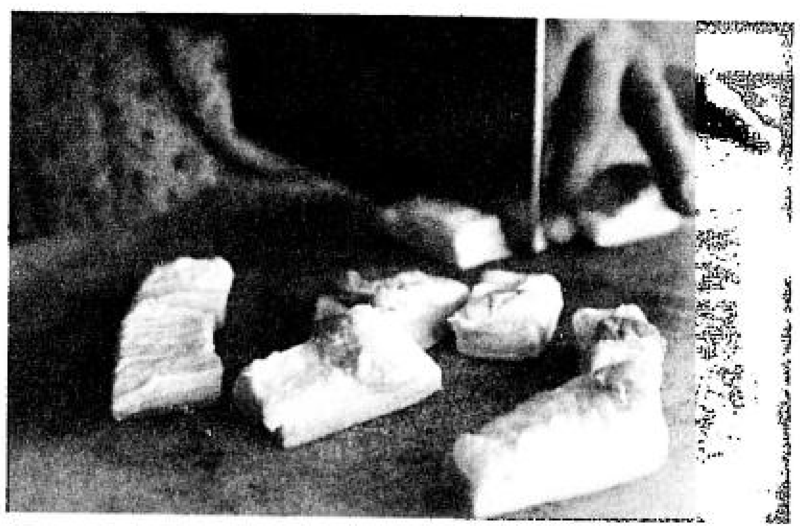
Aling Maring Bornaventa shares an easy-to-do recipe on chicharron. *Aling* Maring learned this from Fortunata Estrada, sister-in-law of former Lifestyle food columnist Eufemia "EC" Estrada.

Approximate cost of this recipe is P300.

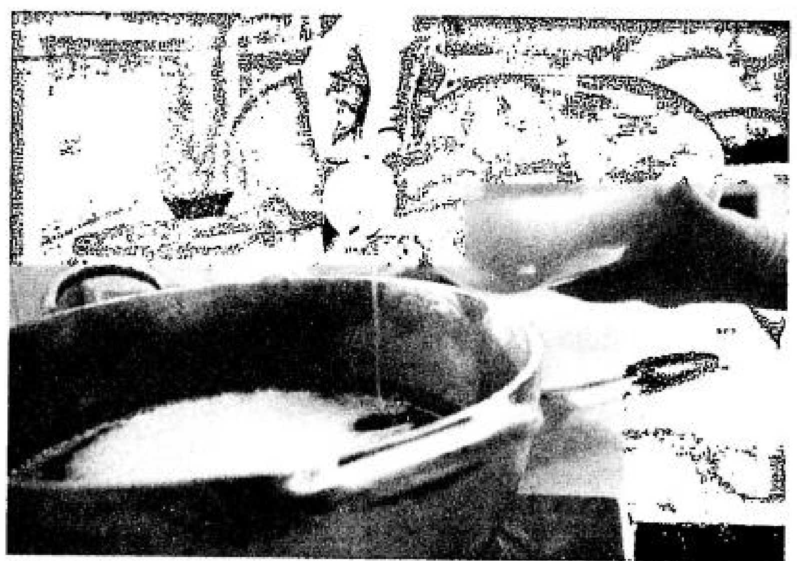
Ingredients:
3 k pork skin
1 tbsp iodized salt
pork lard



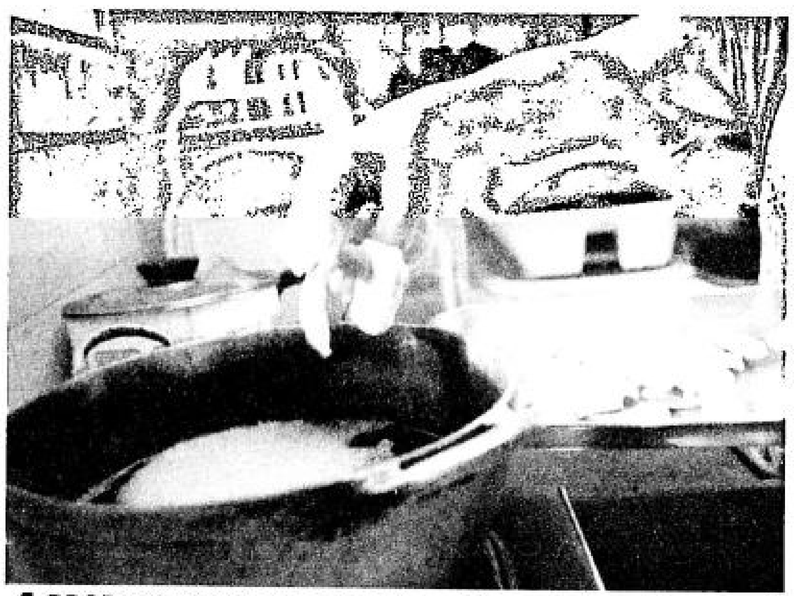
1 **THOROUGHLY** clean pork rind.



2 **CUT** it rectangularly (1x2"). Marinate pork with iodized salt and set aside for five minutes.

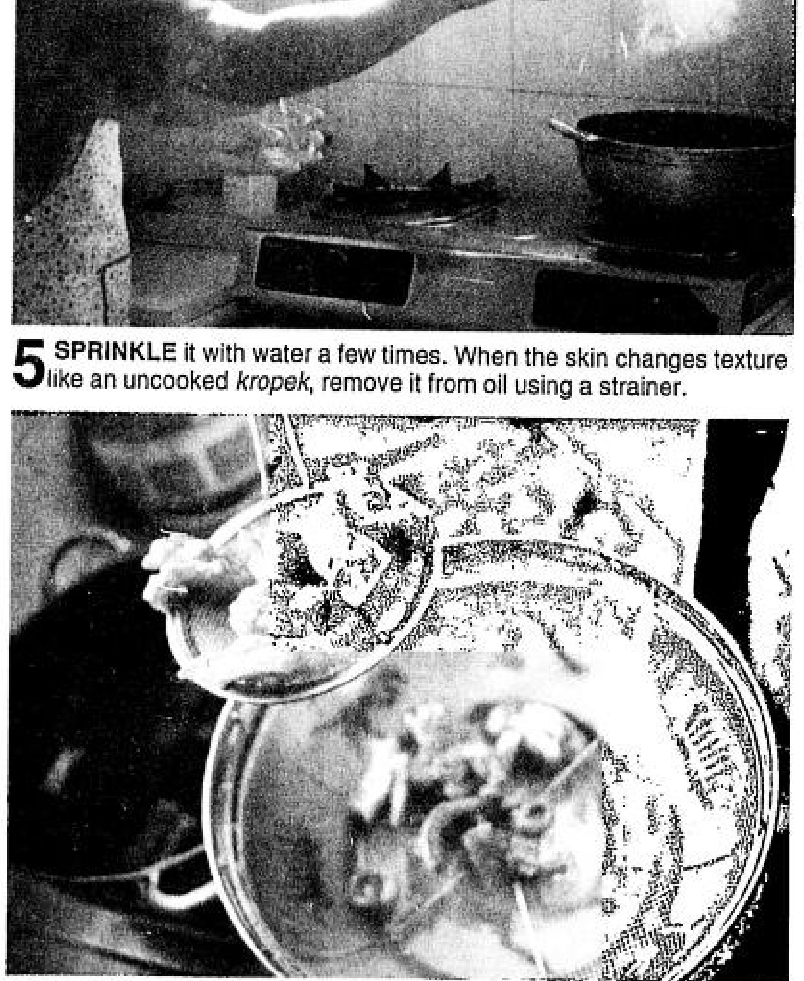


3 **POUR** ½ gallon of pork lard in a deep casserole over medium heat.

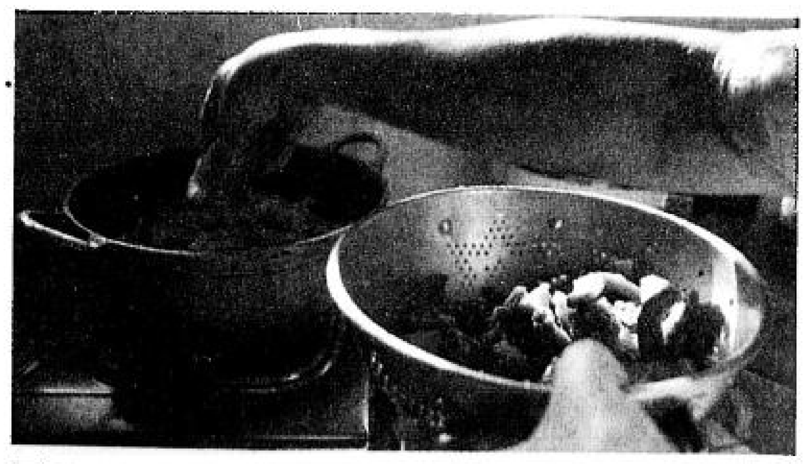


4 **DROP** pork skin into the casserole, making sure all meat is covered with oil. Cook pork skin for two hours, stirring it occasionally.

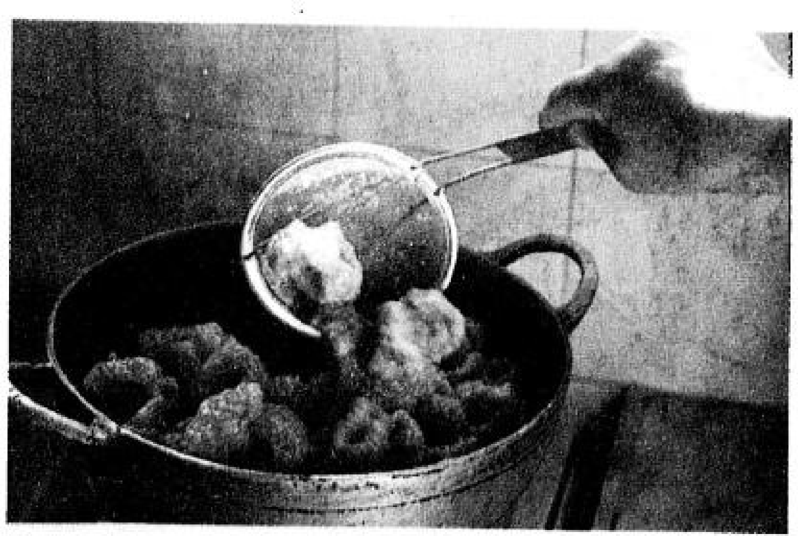
5 **SPRINKLE** it with water a few times. When the skin changes texture like an uncooked *kropek*, remove it from oil using a strainer.



6 **DRAIN** cooked pork and place in a bowl. Cool and cover and let stand at least overnight.

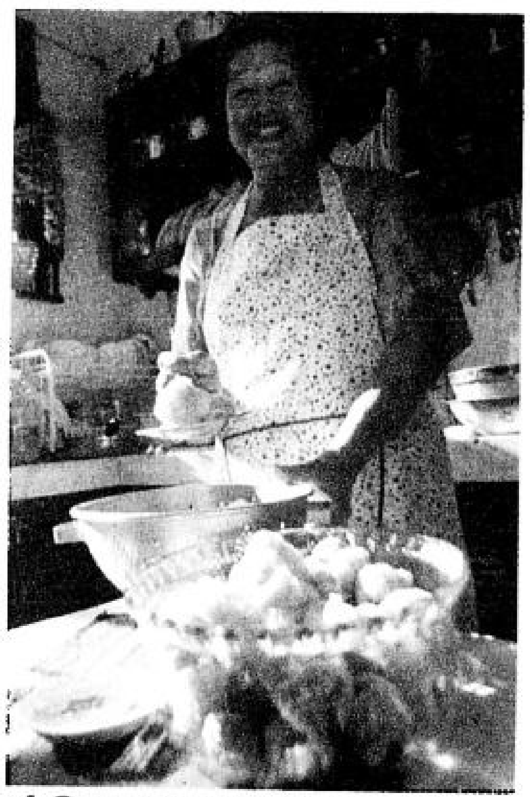


7 **THE FOLLOWING** day, reheat pork lard over medium heat. Slowly drop precooked pork skin, taking care not to overcrowd the casserole to leave room for the skin to expand.

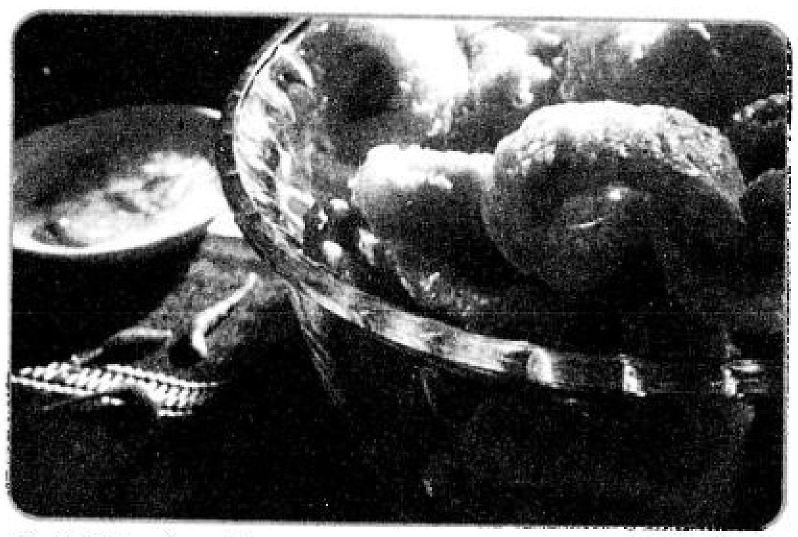


8 **OCCASIONALLY** stir *chicharron*.

9 **WHEN** the *chicharron* turns golden brown, remove from fire and drain in a colander. Let it cool.



10 **MARING** Bornaventa shows off the final result.



11 *CHICHARRON* is best eaten with spicy dip made of vinegar, chili, onion and garlic.

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SHRIMP Creole on yellow rice with a dash of ripe mango salsa

Aresi's cuisine is a mix of European dishes with an Asian touch

GUILT-FREE. Sugar-free strawberry cheesecake

Where the stars dine

By Cathy Babao Guballa
Photos by Roger Carpio

STAR CHEF. Marites Gutierrez

IT is one of the few places in the Metro where one can find executives and production members from the two television network giants dine side by side. With Hollywoodish interiors reminiscent of the upscale dining places in Los Angeles, it attracts a huge lunch and dining crowd. Aresi on the farthest end of Tomas Morato is fine dining at first glance but down-to-earth in prices.

Situated across the hugely popular Gerry's Bar and Grill also on Tomas Morato, the kinship between the two hot spots goes beyond location. Owned and managed by Gerry and Grace Apolinario, Aresi is actually Gerry's younger sibling. Where Gerry's has the tropical resort ambiance, Aresi has panache, with its high ceilings, exposed beams and water curtains. "We wanted to create a fine dining atmosphere but with reasonable pricing," charming Grace Apolinario tells us when we visited Gerry on a sultry, summer afternoon.

The young, enterprising and highly successful couple had grown up in Quezon City and wanted to create a new fine-dining place for Quezon City residents. "The old reliables were there but we wanted something new *naman* to liven up the dining scene in QC," she adds.

The original Gerry's Grill grew out of husband Gerry's passion for dining and entertaining. Grace says that her husband was really the type who putters around the kitchen and creates all sorts of *pulutan* for his friends. Gerry's Grill was their response to a fun, affordable venue with good food where everyone can just, as GenXers call it, "chill out."

For Aresi, whose extensive menu is composed of a mix of fusion and continental cuisine, the Apolinarios engaged the services of an old friend, a culinary whiz with star appeal of her own.

Kitchen wizards

Marites Gutierrez trained with the Center for Culinary Arts and joined Aresi since its inception. Aresi's menu is one of the most extensive I have seen—a wide array of chicken, beef, seafood, pastas, salads, soups. The menu, Marites says, is changed every quarter. "We try to add something new every quarter and retain the old favorites."

Continually challenged, Marites puts in a grueling six-day work week and 10-12 hours in the kitchen on a daily basis. The artistic streak unleashes itself in the innovative dishes that she and her sous chef, Jimmy Delfin, come up with. "We continually experiment," she says with a grin. "Sometimes we're just sitting there during a break and an idea comes then we get all excited."

Marites' forte is Continental and fusion cuisine, which she defines as the mix of European with a touch of Asian. Grilled beef with sherry and shiitake mushrooms, chicken burger with Hoisin dressing or an Asian salad with oyster sauce vinaigrette are some examples of the dishes to be found at Aresi.

Marites cites Baked Mussels, Seafood Marsala, Seafood Fricassee and the Fish Trio as some of the top sellers. Seafood is obviously a favorite at Aresi.

Star quality

By sheer virtue of its location, Aresi attracts a lot of the show-biz crowd who work at either ABS-CBN or GMA 7, so much so that the waiters are no longer star-struck when a celebrity takes a favorite table at Aresi. "*Nasanay na sila,*" Marites smiles. Privy to the favorites of their regulars, Marites says that the king of comedy, Dolphy, always orders his black cod whenever he's in the restaurant. Dina Bonnevie goes for the Oriental salad while Rosanna Roces is loyal to her salmon sashimi. Comedienne Ai-Ai de las Alas orders the tuna while megastar Sharon Cuneta is partial to chicken with mushroom. And what does mom Gloria Romero order when she's there? "Fish trio *iyan,*" Marites grins.

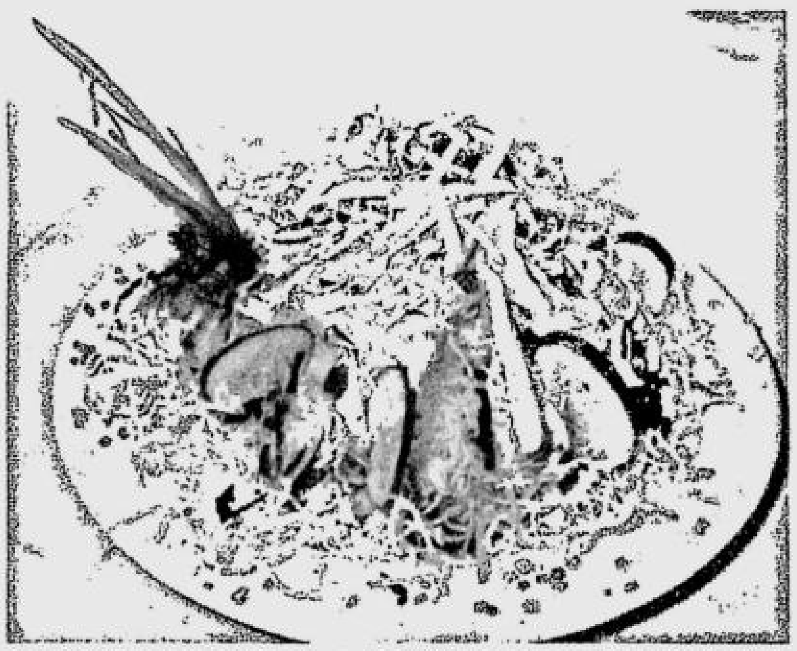
Why would someone go to Aresi among other dining places on Tomas Morato? "Three things–the quality of food, pricing and a relaxing ambiance," Grace emphasizes. True enough, one can have a satisfying dinner for two for about P500, and the interiors are soothing—what with the water gently cascading from one wall of the restaurant. Done in pale yellow and black, the interiors are very stylish. The sound level though is quite high so don't expect any sweet whispers here as most of the time, the din of the diners is quite loud.

Buffet delights

Another special feature of Aresi are its buffets for families on weekends. "This place really gets filled with families on weekends," Marites relates.

On March 25 they started a breakfast buffet that starts at 7 a.m. for the early birds on Tomas Morato. Ongoing is a pica-pica buffet to mark their first anniversary.

Large groups of office workers or *barkadas* out to celebrate a birthday or families marking a graduation often find their way to Aresi's elegant doors. Appearances may be daunting but once inside, delights in terms of price and quality of food wait to be discovered.



HEALTHY HIGH. Aresi's Oriental Salad

FUSION FLAVOR. Grilled sea bass with risotto and teriyaki sauce

GERRY OF GERRY'S. Aresi owners Gerry and Grace Apolinario

The sans rival challenge

ASK NORA

Nora Daza

SHEA Mclennan asked me twice for a recipe of sans rival. My reaction was: "What a complicated dessert to make." Recently, I met Beth who told me that she started a home bakery and did sans rival from my cookbook. That encouraged me.

Let me tell you that you need a lot of practice to succeed in this recipe. Once you get the hang of it, then the whole thing becomes routine.

Start with a lot of tabletop space. I have begun baking again and the lack of one or two pieces of equipment can be frustrating.

When I served sans rival in Paris, I called it Gateau Manille. No one was the wiser. Sans rival, as the name implies, is French. It was first taught at the Cordon Bleu in Paris and was included in their thick cookbook published in 1895. The recipe used hazelnuts. I used almonds at Auxiles Philippines. It was a favorite dessert. Fillings can be varied with different liqueurs and instant coffee powder added to the filling. Some might want to flavor the filling with *ube*. Just add some *ube* jam.

Sans Rival

6-8 egg whites
¼ tsp cream of tartar
¼ c sugar
1½ c cashew nuts or almonds, toasted and chopped
1 tsp vanilla

Have three pieces 18x15" cookie sheets, a large bowl where the egg whites will be beaten and a slow oven that will bake the meringue layers. Egg beaters and bowls have to be completely grease-free. Grease and flour heavily the inverted cookie sheet. Set aside.

I have given you an option on the number of egg whites to use. If you are using small-sized eggs, use more than six. Eggs should be fresh and at room temperature so they'll beat to maximum volume. Beat egg whites with the cream of tartar until you have soft peaks. Continue beating (with an electric egg beater or a wire whip) while adding sugar gradually. Beat until the egg whites are stiff. Fold in 1 cup of the chopped nuts and vanilla. Spread the meringue evenly on the prepared cookie sheets. Bake at 300° for 30 minutes or until meringue is light golden brown.

Using a steel spatula, remove the meringue from the baking pans while still hot and cut off edges to make even-shaped meringue wafers. Allow to cool. You must remove the meringue from the pan while still hot or the meringue gets stuck and you cannot remove it in one piece. Set aside.

Filling:
1 c sugar
½ c sugar to make into a syrup
6-8 egg yolks
1 c butter
2 tbsp rum or Grand Marnier (orange liqueur)

Boil sugar with water until the syrup spins a thread. Have the egg yolks beaten until lemon-colored and pour the hot syrup into the beaten egg yolks in a thin stream. Cool the egg yolk mixture.

Cream the butter and blend the egg yolk mixture into the creamed butter. Flavor with rum or Grand Marnier.

To assemble, arrange a layer of meringue wafer and spread one-third of the filling on the meringue. Cover with the second layer of meringue and continue until the top is covered with the filling.

Spread the butter filling on the sides too and sprinkle ½ c of chopped nuts on surface. Freeze to store. To serve, slice ½-1 inch slices from the frozen sans rival. This is a rich dessert. Frozen, it can keep for weeks.

* * *

Yen Zamora asked about meringue and sylvanas.

I enjoy sylvanas that are thick so that the surface is crisp and brown, while the insides are soft and chewy. In the '60s, the original sylvanas were first sold by a country bakeshop. They were thin meringue wafers with butter cream filling, coated with the same butter cream on all sides and covered with cake crumbs. In spite of its international style, I see this only in Filipino bakeshops. I can imagine the variations one can make these days. One can flavor the filling with *pandan* or chocolate. Or make the meringue with cocoa so that the whole dessert is chocolate-flavored. Or, one can add strips of *macapuno* in the filling.

Sylvanas are similar to sans rival in that the meringue is used. What is different is the butter filling and the cake coating. Whenever my grandchildren see egg yolks, they immediately ask me to make *leche flan*.

Sylvanas

Cookie sheets
Pastry bag and bowls for egg whites

Meringue wafer:
8 egg whites
1/8 tsp cream of tartar
¾ c sugar
1½ c toasted cashew nuts, finely chopped
3 tbsp flour

Beat egg whites with cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Add sugar gradually and continue beating. Mix flour with toasted nuts. When all of the sugar has been added, fold in the nuts and flour.

If you want a thin, crisp meringue wafer, bake in a slow oven of 250°. For a thicker and more chewy meringue, use 300° and pipe out the meringue into thicker mounds.

Line the cookie sheet with aluminum foil. Spoon beaten egg whites into the pastry bag. Pipe out meringue to uniform size mounds. Bake until meringue wafers are slightly brown. Cool.

Butter filling:
1 c butter
¾ c sugar
¾ c milk

Dissolve sugar in milk. Cream butter until it is light and fluffy. Pour milk-sugar mixture in a thin stream until sugar is dissolved and ingredients are well blended. If you want to shorten the preparation of the filling, use 1 c of powdered sugar insteatl. Mix the powdered sugar with the milk and beat as above.

Have 1½ c of cake crumbs. To assemble, spread the butter filling on the inside part of the meringue wafer. Cover with another meringue wafer as you would a sandwich. Spread butter icing on all sides of the sylvana. Coat each piece with cake crumbs. Chill and serve within 24 hours.

* * *

To use the egg yolks, here is a quick recipe for *leche flan*.

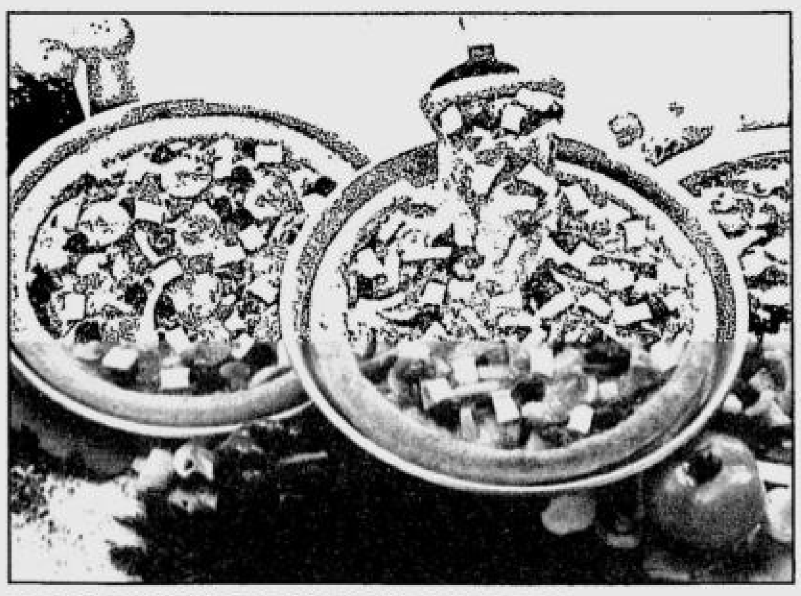
Leche Flan

8 egg yolks
2 c evaporated milk
1 tsp vanilla
1 c sugar

Use a thick-bottomed pan and caramelize sugar. Use 1 c of sugar and ½ c of hot water. Allow sugar to melt. Be careful, as soon as one part gets brown, all the sugar will quickly melt to a golden brown. Pour hot water immediately. See that the water does not splatter on you. Allow the sugar to dissolve. This is what you use as your caramel.

Coat the bottom of the *leche flan* container with ½ c of the caramelized sugar.

Beat egg yolks. Mix sugar into the milk and pour it into the beaten egg yolks. Add the vanilla and pour the mixture into a 1 quart mold. Steam or bake for 1 hour or until the flan is firm. You can fill a pan with water and put the *leche flan* mold in it so the flan cooks at an even temperature—a *banio maria*. Or steam in a container with hot water. Cover the pan with foil and cook by steaming. Cool before you unmold.



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Summer wine and jazz festival

INDULGE your senses in live jazz and smooth wines for three summer evenings when Anthony's Wines and Spirits Corp. presents the first Robert Mondavi Summer Wine and Jazz Festival. The event will be held on April 5-7, 9 p.m.-12 mn, at the Street Café, Power Plant Mall, Lopez Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati.

Guests can savor Robert Mondavi wines al fresco while listening to jazz music from live bands in the unique evening atmosphere of the Rockwell Center. Wine selections include Woodbridge White Zinfandel, noted for its vibrant ripe, red apple and strawberry aromas and flavors with hints of orange blossoms; Woodbridge Sauvignon Blanc, known for its versatile pairings with American food and even Asian dishes; and Woodbridge Merlot, with its rich blackberry, plum and raspberry aromas and flavors with complex nuances of vanilla and spice.

The Caliterra Merlot, on the other hand, has a deep ruby color with an inviting aroma of ripe cherry, plum and blackberry intertwined with some buttery character, while the Caliterra Sauvignon Blanc has a citrus and gooseberry flavor that sparkles with crisp acidity. AWSC considers these wines and more to be best enjoyed on a summer evening with great jazz at this festival.

Participating bars and restaurants are Cork Wine Cellar and Grille, Che, Via Mare, Struan & Tang's Tea Salon, Oyster Bar, The Pacific Wharf and the Rockwell Club.

Eat, drink and forget your food phobias

THE MAD TEA PARTY

Clinton Palanca

AT THE HEIGHT of the scare about the mad cow disease, I went to a Korean restaurant and, after asking the head waiter about the provenance of the beef that they used, proceeded to order raw-beef salad, stewed beef spare ribs and beef strips grilled at the table. This was not an act of deliberate defiance; I'm rather fond of beef, and this is what I usually order at a midrange Korean restaurant. My dining companions stared at me as though I were, well, mad.

But aside from the fact that 20 years is a long time from now, and that I'll probably be dead from some other cause (asphyxiation from riding my Vespa behind buses, too much Dormicum, a blood clot from too many flights on Northwest's economy class), I don't see why a European bovine disease should affect a Southeast Asian diner eating Australian beef. The world may have shrunk, but unless the Eurotrash cows are regularly shuttling back and forth for dalliances with the Friesians in New South Wales, there is no reason to panic.

The wholesale fear, panic and general hysteria is not generated so much by misinformation (I followed the newspaper reports closely, and all of them carefully localized the disease as a European phenomenon) as the public's very willing desire for fear, panic and general hysteria, especially about food. Everyone has heard rumors about Kentucky Fried Chicken using mutant chickens with six legs, or that Jollibee hamburgers are actually made from earthworms, or that Orbitz and Zagu's powders are carcinogenic, or that *taho* is actually made from plaster of Paris, or that oyster sauce will make you convulse and eventually explode, and so on. Without having to quote Barthes or Levi-Strauss (or, more truthfully, an unwillingness to root through my piles of books to find the exact reference), it all brings us back to the whole idea that food is either good or bad, that it will heal you or kill you, that it will save your soul or send you to eternal damnation.

The other day, a friend whom I had met in Paris was in town for a few days, and she invited me to a dinner party that her parents were giving. The caterer was Fernando Aracama of Uva. The meal began with an entrée of fish in crab fat on sticky rice, cooked in little banana-leaf boxes; then came a sweet-pea panna cotta; pan-seared foie gras on poached turnips in a mushroom broth; a *kamias* sorbet; poached (*pesang*) fish (salmon and sea bass) with fermented bean curd; and for dessert, tiny inverted cups of *suman* with tuiles and ginger ice cream.

This bald recitation of ingredients and courses and flavors makes the whole thing seem fiddly-diddly, over-intellectualized Filipino fusion cuisine of the sort that is trotted out by those who have axes to grind about New Philippine Cuisine and innovation and who need something exotic yet urbane to exhibit at international food festivals. In other words, food that sounds good but is actually somewhat inedible. This one wasn't: the flavors blended; the courses built upon one another as an arpeggio; the lightness of the main course was capped off with a cymbal crash with the rice-and-ice-cream dessert.

Throughout the meal, amid the polite murmurs about the food (at a dinner party, you'll never know if your guests really enjoyed the food or not, because they'll always say it was wonderful), I noticed something odd: one guest continually used the words "sinful" and "divine" to describe the food. "My God, this is so bad for me, this will kill me," she said, and then eagerly tucked into the chocolate truffles.

Some of our food fears are supported by medical research. I don't doubt the simple truth that eating foie gras or six eggs every day will first make you grossly obese and then probably cause you to keel over at some point. There are some foods that will encourage (not cause) cancer. And I have no doubt that there are some preservatives that are being put into food that will not exactly make you healthy and strong. Have you ever wondered, though, why food that is supposedly good for you, like tofu, bran, boiled vegetables, steamed fish, and have I mentioned tofu, is usually disgusting and tasteless, while food that is good to eat is always bad for you?

Ah, such is life, we say, philosophically, and reach for the toast. To which I say: No, such is the way that we think. It's a combination of ancient Judaic practices of classifying food as "clean" or "unclean," which then evolved and branched off and attacked us in a pincer movement: the puritanical Protestant idea, filtered through American influences, that self-deprivation is good for the soul; the Roman Catholic belief that if it feels good, it must be evil.

In other words, we invent values for food. In the same way that we feel an adulterous liaison can be atoned for by 30 Hail Marys and a donation to the parish, we feel that last night's rib-eye steak can be atoned for by steamed *bok choi* and Weetabix the next day. But the body's physiognomy functions like a machine, not like a confessional. The vegetables and bran make us feel better about the "sinful" excesses not because of inherent qualities, but because they taste bad.

When I was teaching college freshmen, I ran into trouble with the authorities because I assigned novels that contained sex, and "sex is evil," they told me, exactly in those words. (Some of these freshmen, later in the semester, would come to me for advice, saying "How can something that feels so good be wrong?," exactly in those words.) When we enjoy good food, we feel that there must be payback of some sort. The more religious or superstitious may feel that the retribution will be moral or spiritual. Others, who pride themselves on their modern attitudes, believe the retribution to be physical; there is talk of linoleic acid and triglycerides, of procarcinogen and benzopyrene, but in the end the message is the same: what you enjoy now will eventually get back to you.

And then once in a while there's a scare like the threat of carcinogens in oyster sauce or pearl shakes causing brain damage (personally, I think the brain damage comes first before the desire for pearl shakes). And, of course, mad cow disease, which sounds appealingly biblical: eat a nice juicy porterhouse, and thou shalt be possessed by demons! It's very simple. If in doubt, don't; but once you've found out, then act accordingly. Generations have grown up eating *taho* from the streets, and I have yet to see anyone who has turned white and chalky from it. And eating fishballs (which is usually the Assumptionista's first sneaky act, to be followed by the cigarette in the bathroom, and later by making out with a *coño* from CSA) does not, as one girl earnestly explained to me, cause hemorrhoids.

It's time to chuck food phobias out the window, or at least get used to the idea that food is neither "good" nor "bad," but simply has certain effects on the body. It's not just information that we need, but new oppositions and dichotomies for classifying food. And finally, of course, as a friend puts it: everything in moderation. Even moderation.

E-mail the author at clinton@i-manila.com.ph

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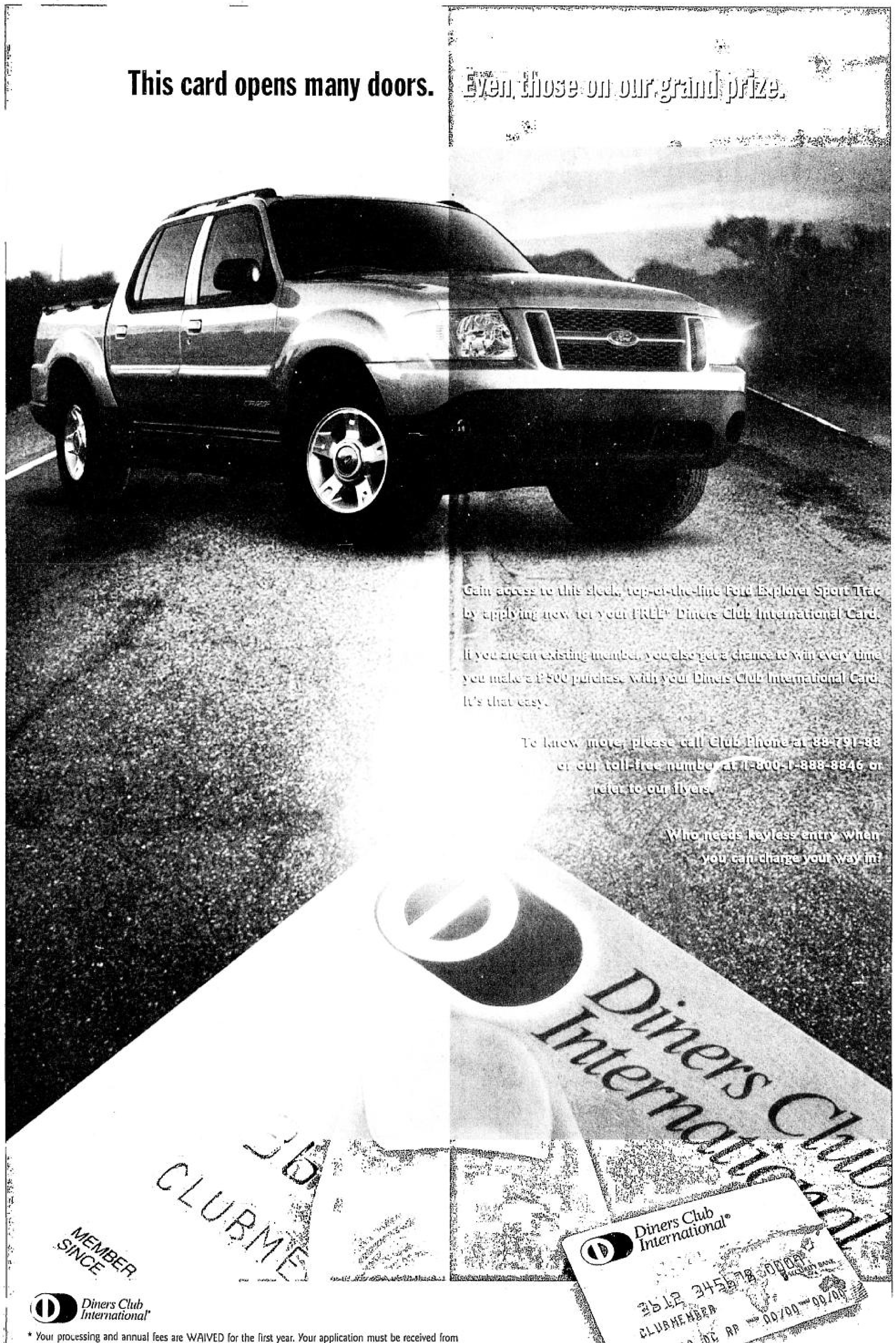
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Where the stars dine

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WOMEN ON WINGS OF FUN

Psychology expert John Gray once made an observation about men and women. He said it so well, it became the title of his bestseller – Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus. Yes, indeed, men and women are not only poles apart in their thinking, in their concerns and in many other ways...they are planets apart. So they say – it takes a woman to enjoy the company of another woman doing "woman" things like hectic non-stop shopping, a lazy day at the spa, enjoying a jazz festival and so on....

It is on this note that Singapore Airlines launches the Women on Wings Privilege Promotion – a specially-designed vacation promo package for women only. A salute to women who work hard at their careers and who work even harder at their homes and family life. They, too, deserve a break from the rest of mankind, don't they?

SIA's Women on Wings Privilege Promotion starts on March 22 and runs until May 31, 2001. It targets a group of two or more women who would just like to drop everything...and hie off, or better yet – fly to their dream vacation.

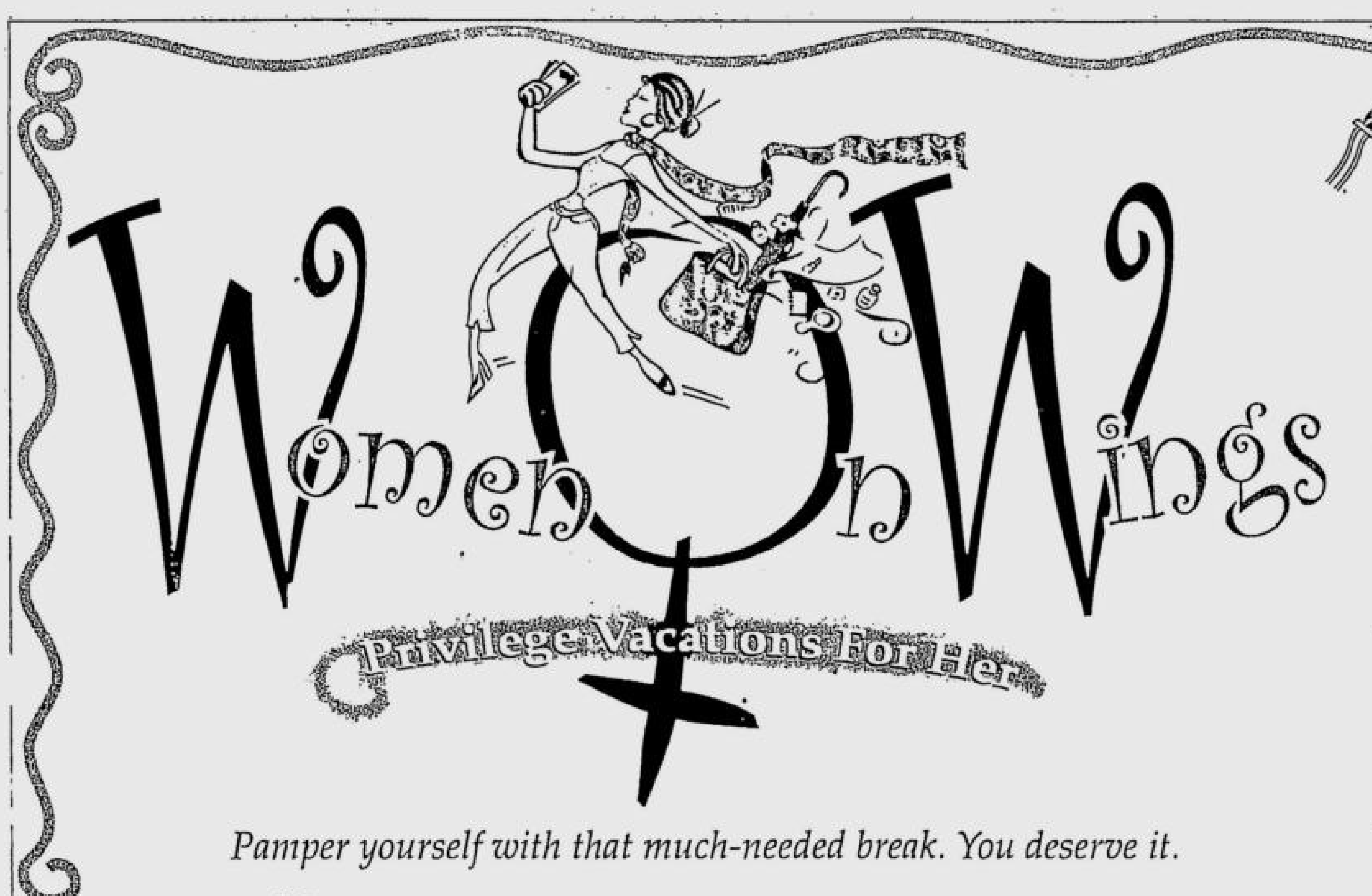
From as low as $456 per person, they can take a trip to exciting New Asia Singapore. While at Singapore, they may also catch Asia's biggest musical event of the year – the Singapore Jazz Festival which will be held from May 18 to 20 at Suntec City. (Tickets are available from $50 per person.) At a little extra cost, there are also three other exotic Asian destinations to choose from – Bali, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. These privilege tours range from 3 days to 4 days, depending on the package chosen, with the option of extending one's stay. Ladies who avail of the packages to Kuala Lumpur or Bali may choose to extend a night's stay in Singapore for only $20 per person. A special treat for our ladies visiting Bangkok for they will enjoy the additional night's hotel stay in Singapore for FREE!

All packages include roundtrip airfare on Singapore Airlines' new Economy class, hotel accommodation, energizing daily American breakfasts, worry-free roundtrip airport transfers, guided city tours, special gifts from Singapore Airlines like an exclusive Batik umbrella and one-year subscription to METRO magazine...and lots of "do-as-you-please" hours of fun, shopping, maybe even soul-searching.

For women who prefer colorful structural artistry, there is the Kuala Lumpur Privilege Promotion. Starting from $654, it covers 3 days and 4 nights and a half-day city tour with guide. It carries with it the following health and beauty spa treats at the Regent KL – the traditional Japanese Shiatsu, a form of acupressure that massages the energy points of the body and releases stress...the Aromatherapy Massage with an array of natural essential oils to choose from – lavender, tangerine, rosemary and more.

To top it all, rest assured you will be pampered by the world-renowned in-flight services offered on Singapore Airlines' new Economy class – from the mouth-watering choice of menus, free-flowing champagne, to the state-of-the-art audio-video entertainment system (Krisworld).

So – all women, unite! Call your lady friends now. For more information or for ticketing, please get in touch with your favorite Travel Agent or contact the SIA Tours Desk at 8104960 locals 4005 and 4006 or at 7515151 to 52. Women, like you, should definitely ride on the wings of fun!



Pamper yourself with that much-needed break. You deserve it.
Avail yourself of any of these package tours:
BALI, BANGKOK or KUALA LUMPUR
• Roundtrip economy class airfares
• 4-day/3-night hotel & transfers
• Daily American breakfast
• Half-day guided tour
• One session spa treatment
• FREE 1-year subscription to Metro Magazine
• Additional night's stay in Singapore for US$20*
From US$654*
SINGAPORE
• Roundtrip economy class airfares
• 3-day/2-night hotel & transfers
• Daily American breakfast
• Half-day guided tour
• One session spa treatment in Manila
• FREE 1-year subscription to Metro Magazine
From US$456*
BONUS FREE Singapore Airlines umbrella for the first 100 W-O-W lady customers
For bookings or information, please contact your travel agent or the SIA Tours Desk at 7515151 / 52 and 8104960 ext. 4005 / 4006.
• Valid from 22 March to 31 May 2001 • Prices based on per adult twin-share • Surcharge of US$50 will apply for male customers • Rates subject to change without prior notice • Other conditions apply
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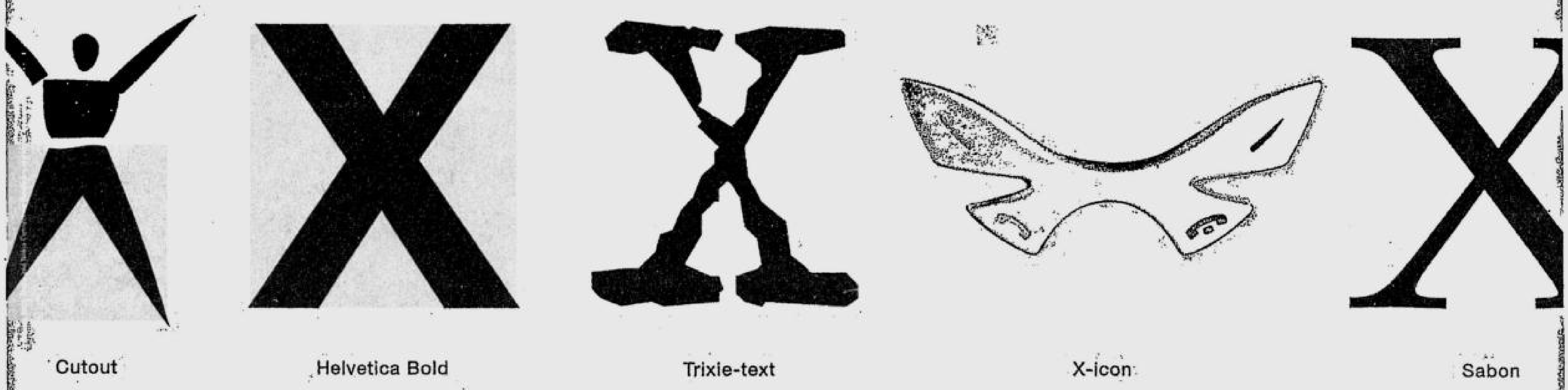

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